NATION

Citizens recount dark Emergency period

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BUSINESS

50% of India's power generation comes from non-fossil sources

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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US enters war as it bombs Iran's nuke sites

Trump acts without Congress' approval; Iran says won't stop nuke programme, vows revenge

DUBAI, 22 JUNE

The United States launched airstrikes on three major nuclear sites in Iran on Sunday, marking its formal entry into Israel's attack against the Islamic Republic. The move escalated regional tensions and drew immediate condemnation from Tehran, which accused Washington of starting "a dangerous war."

President Donald Trump, speaking from the White House, said the facilities were "completely and fully obliterated" and warned that any retaliation from Iran would be met with further US strikes. He acted without congressional authorisation, and the White House offered no immediate detail beyond the President's address.

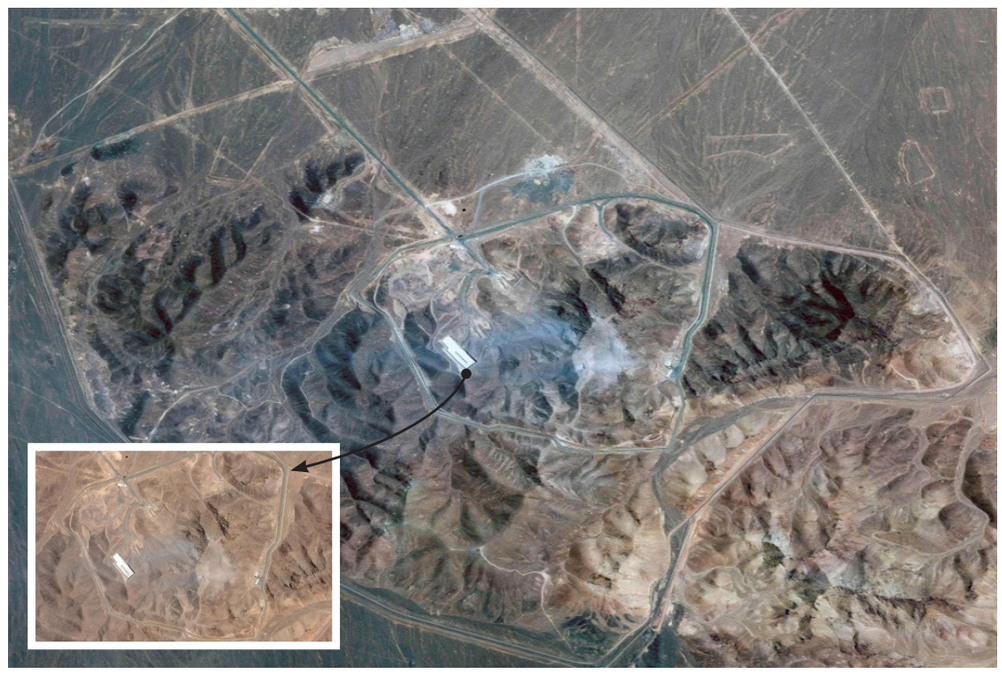
According to US officials, the targets included Iran's Fordo, Isfahan, and Natanz nuclear facilities. Fordo, buried deep in a mountain, was struck with 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs delivered by B-2 stealth bombers. Separately, about 30 Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched from submarines.

No radioactive contamination

Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation confirmed the strikes but insisted its nuclear programme would continue. Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported no immediate signs of radioactive contamination. The IAEA said it would continue monitoring the situation.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi condemned the US attack as a violation of international law, the UN Charter, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He declared that "the time for diplomacy is over" and that Iran would defend itself. "There is no red line the US has not crossed," he said, referring specifically to the targeting of nuclear facilities. Araghchi also announced he would travel to Moscow later on Sunday to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin.

President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance sit in the Situation Room at the White House in Washington **PHOTO: PTI**



This Planet Labs PBC satellite photo shows Iran's Fordo nuclear facility after a US airstrike on Sunday. Visible damage includes smoke, destroyed entry points, and blocked tunnels into the mountain, suggesting Iran may need to excavate the site to access the underground facility **PHOTO: PTI**

Iran to close Hormuz

Iran is considering closing the key oil shipping route Strait of Hormuz. It is one of the world's most critical chokepoints, through which a fifth of global oil and gas supply flows.

Hours after the strikes, Iran's Revolutionary Guard launched 40 missiles at Israel, including Khorramshahr-4 models capable of carrying multiple warheads. In Tel Aviv, one multi-storey building was gutted, with surrounding homes also destroyed. Israel responded by launching fresh strikes on military targets in western Iran and said it had neutralised the missile launchers responsible. The Israeli military warned that it was preparing for a prolonged conflict. In response to the volatile situation, Israel closed its airspace to all flights.

Iran's Foreign Ministry released a statement accusing the US of "betraying diplomacy" and launching "a dangerous war." It vowed full resistance against what it called "the crimes committed by this rogue regime," pledging to defend Iran's security and national interests.

US attacks mount tensions

The US decision to join the conflict came after weeks of mounting tension. Israel began its campaign on 13 June with strikes targeting Iranian military and nuclear infrastructure, killing several top Iranian officials and nuclear scientists. Iran retaliated with missile and drone barrages, prompting this latest response from Washington.

Trump's direct intervention marks a dramatic shift from his earlier stance.

Though long critical of "forever wars," Trump had also insisted he would never allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon. He previously claimed that military pressure could persuade Tehran to negotiate, and had twice urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to delay military action in favour of diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned earlier in the week that any US military action would bring "irreparable damage" to Washington.

With Israeli airspace closed and commercial flights suspended, the Indian missions in Israel and Jordan, evacuated 160 Indian nationals in the first batch under Operation Sindhu on Sunday.

Indians evacuated from Israel

India also evacuated more than 300 Indian nationals from Iran.

The Ministry of External Affairs said 311 Indians landed in Delhi on a special flight from the Iranian city of Mashhad.

With the fresh batch of evacuees, the total number of those brought back from Iran now stands at 1,428. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pgs 3, 5, 6 & 7

> "Iran, the bully of the Middle East must now make peace. If they do not, future attacks will be far greater and a lot easier. There will be either peace or there will be tragedy for Iran...
>
> -Donald Trump, US President

Russia snubs US for strikes

Russia on Sunday condemned the US strikes on Iranian nuclear sites as "irresponsible" and a violation of international law, the UN Charter, and Security Council resolutions. The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin has no immediate plans to speak with US President Donald Trump, though a call could be arranged if needed. Senior lawmaker Leonid Slutsky accused Trump of being drawn into a regime-change agenda.

India urges Iran to de-escalate

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to pursue immediate de-escalation amid the ongoing conflict with Israel. In a social media post, Modi expressed India's "deep concern" over the situation and called for a return to dialogue and diplomacy to restore regional peace and stability. Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused the US of committing a "grave violation" of international law.

NIA arrests 2 men for harbouring Pahalgam terrorists

SRINAGAR, 22 JUNE

In a major breakthrough, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two men for harbouring the terrorists who had carried out the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 people dead, the agency said on Sunday.

According to the NIA, the two men, Parvaiz Ahmad Jothar from Batkote and Bashir Ahmad Jothar of Hill Park in Pahalgam, have disclosed the identities of the three armed terrorists involved in the attack.

They have also confirmed that the assailants were Pakistani nationals affiliated to the proscribed terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

"Parvaiz and Bashir had knowingly harboured the three armed terrorists at a seasonal dhok (hut) at Hill Park before the attack," the NIA said.

The two men had provided food, shelter and logistical support to the terrorists, who selectively killed the tourists on the basis of their religious identity on April 22, making it one of the most gruesome terrorist attacks ever.

The NIA has arrested the duo under Section 19 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. *—PTI*

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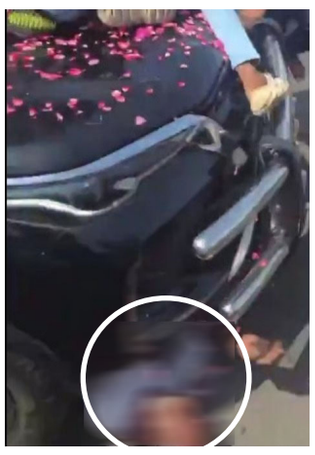
Jagan's car runs over elderly man, kills him



YSRCP supporter was killed after being run over by former Andhra CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's car during a rally in Sattenapalli, Guntur. At the same time Jagan, who was in the passenger seat, was seen standing out of the car door, greeting supporters **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

VIJAYAWADA, 22 JUNE

An elderly YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) supporter, Cheeli Singaiah, 65, was killed after being run over by a vehicle in former Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's convoy during a rally in Sattenapalli, Guntur.

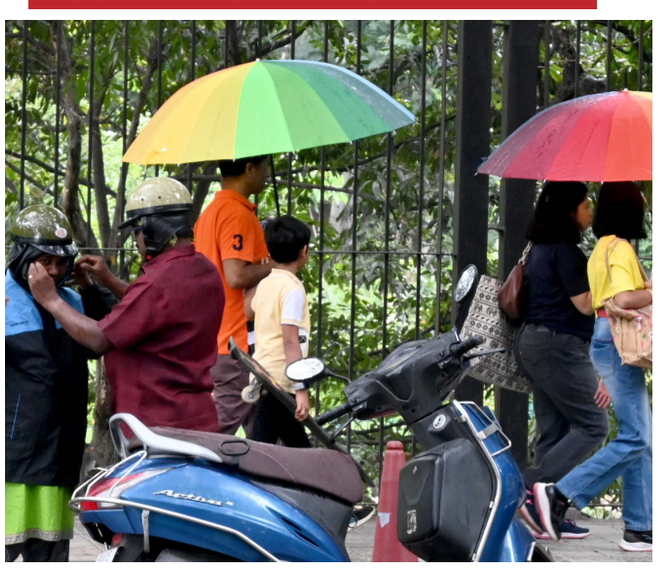
Singaiah, a resident of Vengalayapalem village, was attempting to shower flowers on Jagan's vehicle when he slipped and fell near Eturukur village. Viral videos confirmed that it was Reddy's own car that struck and fatally injured him. Witnesses said police and supporters shouted for the convoy to stop, but the vehicle continued moving forward. His neck was crushed under the front right wheel.

Initially, it was believed he fell while climbing onto a vehicle, but police later confirmed he was knocked down by the crowd. Guntur SP S Satish Kumar stated the man was taken to hospital by an ASI and YSRCP workers but died en route.

Jagan was reportedly unaware of the incident as the rally continued. The event drew an unexpectedly large crowd, despite police allowing only three vehicles and around 100 participants. The chaos overwhelmed security forces.

Jagan was returning from Rentapalla village, where he had visited a grieving family. On the same day, another supporter, 30-year-old P. Jayvardhan Reddy, died after collapsing in a commotion in Sattenapalli. TDP and Congress have criticised Jagan for insensitivity. YSRCP leaders later visited Singaiah's family and handed over a Rs 10 lakh ex-gratia cheque. TDP MP Lavu Krishnadevarayalu said, "Politics should never cost lives." *—Agencies*

SUNDAY UNDER UMBRELLA



As the rain drizzled for a few minutes in the City, people took shelter in umbrellas on Sunday afternoon **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

PREGNANCY REVEALS CRIME

13 gangrape Andhra girl for 2 yrs, villagers try to hush case

EDGURALLAPALLI, 22 JUNE

Thirteen people have been arrested for allegedly gangraping 15-year-old Dalit girl in Sri Satya district for two years, said police.

The crime, which resulted in the girl becoming pregnant, came to light on 9 June after she filed a complaint.

A case has been registered under several sections including the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, prevention of SC/ST Atrocities Act and BNS.

According to police, Achampalli Vardhan, 21; Talari Murali, 25; Badagorla Nandavardhan Raj, 23; Arencheru Nagaraju, 51; Boya Sanjeev, 40; and Budida Rajanna, 49, were arrested on 9 June.

Some of the arrested individuals have criminal records, the police said.

Seven others were arrested on 10 June, while the main accused is still at large.

Investigation revealed that the girl was blackmailed using her 'inappropriate images and videos'.

The girl is eight months pregnant and currently receiving treatment at a government general hospital in Ananthapur. Doctors have decided against an abortion due to the advanced stage of pregnancy.

"Despite being pregnant for eight months, no local alerted the officials. We believe caste stigma and fear led to the community's silence over the repeated abuse," a police official told PTI.

It is suspected that some villagers pressured the girl into marrying one of the accused to close the case, police said.

The victim's mother is a labourer and her husband passed away. Police believe their vulnerable situation may have made them more susceptible to community pressure and silence.

The girl is a government school student and the police is investigating lapses by school, health, or child protection officials. *—PTI*

Seven-weekly flights on three routes — Bengaluru-Singapore, Pune-Singapore and Mumbai-Bagdogra — will be suspended **PHOTO: PTI**

AIR INDIA CUTS NARROW-BODY FLIGHTS ON 19 ROUTES

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Air India on Sunday said it will temporarily reduce 118 weekly flights operated with narrow-body planes on 19 routes and suspend services on three routes.

The announcement comes days after the Tata Group-owned carrier said it will cut international flights operated with wide-body planes by 15 per cent temporarily.

In a statement, the airline said it is going for "temporary cuts of less than 5 per cent to its overall narrow-body network".

Seven-weekly flights on three routes — Bengaluru-Singapore, Pune-Singapore and Mumbai-Bagdogra (AI551/552) — will be suspended till at least 15 July.

Flights on various other routes, including Delhi-Bengaluru and Delhi-Mumbai, will be reduced. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Farm labourer found dead in Mysuru

MYSURU, 22 JUNE

A farm labourer was found dead with his throat slit in Bogeshwara colony in HD Kote in Mysuru district. The victim, R Mukundan, 38 was found dead on the night of 21 June. Mukundan, hailing from Kerala, cultivated several types of crops in over 10 acres of land, which he had obtained from local farmers on lease for 10 years. He resided at a farmshed built on the land. A case was registered and the police were investigating the matter. They suspected him to have been murdered by his friends while he was in an inebriated condition at his farmshed. *—Salar News*

ASI killed in Dharwad bike accident

DHARWAD, 22 JUNE

Assistant Sub Inspector Yallappa Kumbar, attached to the District Reserve Force at Dharwad, died on the spot after an unknown vehicle hit his bike between Dharwad and Hubballi on Sunday. Kumbar was going towards Hubballi from Dharwad when his bike was hit on the bypass road near Ittigatti in Dharwad taluk. He sustained severe head injuries. The Dharwad Rural police have registered a case as hit-and-run and launched a hunt for the vehicle and its driver. *—Salar News*

Call to give LC slot to Bhovi Samaj leader

MYSURU, 22 JUNE

Former chairman of Karnataka State Bhovi Development Cor poration, GV Seetharam on Sunday urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to nominate one of the leaders from Bhovi community to the State legislative council in the upcoming elections.

Seetharam said that even though the Bhovi community strongly supported Congress in both State legislative assembly and Parliament elections, the party did not provide a ticket to any leader from the community to contest in the parliamentary elections.

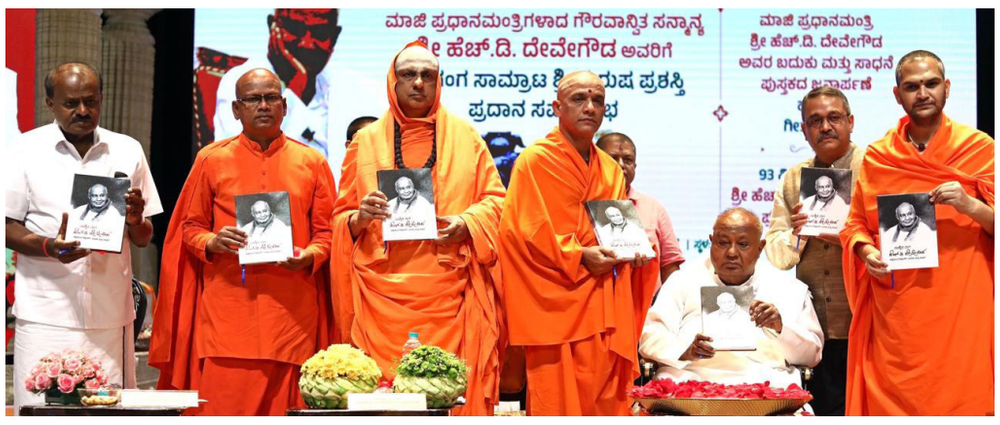
The Congress High Command also failed to nominate a leader from the community to Rajya Sabha. "Former chief minister R Gundurao had nominated R Peeranna of the Bhovi community to the State legislative council. After him no leader from the community was elected to legislative council," Seetharam said.

The community also urged the Congress government to nominate one of its members to the council. *—Salar News*

Deve Gowda writes to Modi on mango farmers' plight

Says situation worsened, highlights Andhra's totapuri ban

BENGALURU, 22 JUNE



Adichunchanagiri mutt seer Niramalandanatha, Suttur mutt seer Shivaratri Dheshikendra, Gurugunda Brahmeshwara mutt seer Nanjavudutha present 'Sri Ranga Samrat, Sri Purusha' Award to ex-PM HD Deve Gowda, in Bengaluru on Sunday. Union minister HD Kumaraswamy is also seen *PHOTO: PTI*

Former prime minister and JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda on Sunday sought PM Narendra Modi's intervention to rescue State farmers facing steep losses due to poor yield of mangoes, price crashes, and interstate trade disruptions.

In a letter to Modi, Gowda said that State, a major horticulture hub in the country, especially in the production of mangoes, is witnessing an unprecedented crisis.

He noted that mangoes are grown on 1.39 lakh hectares across districts like Bengaluru Rural, Urban, Chikkaballapura, Kolar, and Ramanagara, with an expected production of eight lakh to 10 lakh tonne during the Rabi season. However, this year, output has fallen by more than 70 per cent due to adverse weather and disease.

"The situation worsened between May and June when market arrivals surged, causing mango prices to plummet from Rs 12,000 per quintal to as low as Rs 3,000 per quintal-far below the cultivation cost of Rs 5,466 per quintal," he said.

Many small and marginal farmers are now unable to recover even their input costs, pushing them into distress and triggering protests in several districts.

The former prime minister also highlighted the additional blow to growers along Karnataka's border due to Andhra Pradesh banning the entry of Totapuri mangoes into its Chittoor district.

"This interstate restriction has disrupted the supply chain and aggravated post-harvest losses," he wrote, adding that the Karnataka Chief Minister and Chief Secretary have already raised the matter with Andhra counterparts, seeking a reversal of the ban.

Calling the situation dire, he urged Modi to immediately instruct central agencies like National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd and National Cooperative Consumers Federation of India to begin mango procurement under the Price Deficiency Payment and Market Intervention Scheme.

He suggested that procurement should be done directly from farmers and through Farmer Producer Organisations to ensure fair prices and prevent further rural distress.

He also wrote a similar letter to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan. *—PTI*

The Krishna Raja Sagara dam's water level stood at 119.4 feet on Sunday, only five feet below its brim *PHOTO: PTI*

KRS dam may fill up early this year

MYSURU, 22 JUNE

The KRS (Krishna Raja Sagara) dam in Srirangapatna Taluk of Mandya district has only five feet left to reach its maximum capacity, officials said on Sunday.

The dam's water level stood at 119.4 feet on Sunday, while its full capacity is 124.8 feet. The dam has a maximum storage capacity of 49.452 TMC ft, and it currently holds 39.118 TMC ft of water.

Usually, the dam fills to its brim by the end of July or August. However, officials said that if the current inflow – hovering around 13,359 cusecs – continued, the dam is likely to reach its full capacity within the next three days. This is because of heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of the Cauvery River, including in Madikeri and Harangi Dam, from the last week of May till mid-June.

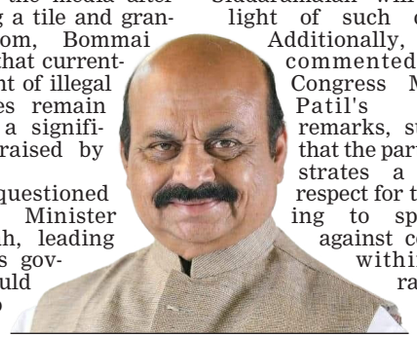
- Usually, the dam fills to its brim by the end of July or August. However, officials said if the current inflow continued, the dam is likely to reach its full capacity in three more days

This year's early surge has brought relief to farmers, as nearby lakes and ponds are also filling up, recharging groundwater and ensuring better irrigation prospects. Usually, after the dam's water level crosses 100 feet, it takes some time to reach the maximum level. *—Salar News*

'90% of illegal mining cases unresolved'

BENGALURU, 22 JUNE

Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, has raised concerns over the state government's handling of illegal mining cases, following a letter from Law Minister HK Patil expressing dissatisfaction with the situation. Speaking to the media after inaugurating a tile and granite showroom, Bommai highlighted that currently, 90 per cent of illegal mining cases remain unresolved, a significant issue raised by Patil.



Bommai questioned how Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, leading the Congress government, would respond to the criticisms from his own cabinet member. "HK Patil has highlighted the critical point that the majority of cases registered regarding illegal mining are still pending resolution," he stated.

He further remarked that the people of the State are eager to see the actions Siddaramaiah will take in light of such concerns.

Additionally, Bommai commented on Congress MLA BR Patil's recent remarks, suggesting that the party demonstrates a lack of respect for those willing to speak out against corruption within its ranks. *—PTI*

MARCHING IN PRIDE

LGBTQ+ members take part in Karnataka Swabhimana Habba (Pride Rally) organised by the Coalition for Sexual Workers and Sexual and Gender Minorities Rights from Sree Kanteerava Stadium to Town Hall in Bengaluru on Sunday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

AUDIO CLIP 'EXPOSES' GOVT

BJP plans protest against housing scheme corruption

BENGALURU, 22 JUNE

In response to allegations of corruption in housing schemes for the poor, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced plans for a protests across the State. However, the party has yet to clarify when this demonstration will occur.

BJP State President BY Vijayendra stated, "Senior leader and Congress MLA BR Patil has thrown light on the grave situation prevailing in the state. Patil has exposed the corruption within the department entrusted with providing housing to the poor." The controversy erupted following an audio recording of Patil's phone conversation with Housing Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan's private secretary, Sarfaraz Khan, which went viral and prompted embarrassment for the ruling Congress government.

Patil, who is also the Deputy Chairman of the Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission, confirmed the authenticity of the audio, asserting, "It is my voice in the audio. I have spoken... I have said whatever I had to." He expressed uncertainty regarding potential actions from the Chief Minister.

Vijayendra further asserted, "This Congress government has become a curse for the poor people of the State," accusing the administration of rampant corruption that is now coming to light through Patil's revelations. He emphasised, "The BJP will take to the streets on this issue." *—PTI*

DKS announces launch of CityCat cleaning vehicles

BENGALURU, 22 JUNE

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday announced the launch of a new, advanced CityCat cleaning vehicle for Bengaluru, as part of efforts to make the City cleaner and greener.

He said the initiative reflects the government's commitment to improving the city's cleanliness and infrastructure.

In a post on X, the deputy CM wrote, "Cleaner Bengaluru, Smarter Bengaluru. The all-new, state-of-the-art #CityCat vehicle is ready to roll out on Bengaluru's streets. This is more than a machine - it's a symbol of our commitment to a cleaner, greener future. We're transforming our city, one bold step at a time, and we won't stop until #Bengaluru shines."

A CityCat cleaning vehicle in action in Bengaluru *PHOTO: X/DKS*

The CityCat machine is part of an upgraded fleet of cleaning vehicles aimed at supporting BBMP's solid waste management and street sanitation efforts. *—ANI/Agencies*

'AEROPLANE PUNISHMENT'

50 years later, BJP legislator recalls horror of Emergency

BENGALURU, 22 JUNE

"I boarded an aeroplane for the first time in November 1975," BJP MLA S Suresh Kumar said with biting sarcasm, recalling the trauma of the Emergency imposed by then prime minister Indira Gandhi on 25 June, 1975.

Kumar, then a young political activist, was arrested and subjected to brutal treatment at Bengaluru's High Grounds police station before being shifted to Bengaluru Central Jail, where he spent 15 months.

The "aeroplane" punishment, he explained, involved having one's hands tied behind the back and being hoisted upward—an ordeal causing unbearable pain.

The 21-month Emergency cast a long, dark shadow over democratic institutions nationwide, and the State was no exception. Press censorship, mass arrests under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), and a climate of fear reshaped political and social landscape.

Among the notable detenus was senior BJP leader and former deputy prime minister LK Advani, who was imprisoned in City during this period. His incarceration, along with that of other national leaders, became a defining chapter in the resistance against authoritarianism.

He recalled participating in a protest at Mysore Bank Circle on 26 June, 1975—perhaps the first significant anti-Emergency demonstration in State. Surprisingly, no arrests were made that day.

Soon after, on 4 July, the RSS, Jamaat-e-Islami, and 11 other political organisations were banned.

Among the notable detainees was senior BJP leader and former deputy prime minister LK Advani *PHOTO: PTI*

Kumar said the State's Congress government, led by chief minister D Devaraj Urs, implemented directives with near-total obedience to Delhi. Urs, remembered for land reforms and championing backward classes, oversaw a regime that clamped down harshly on dissent.

- BJP MLA S Suresh Kumar, then a young political activist, was arrested and subjected to brutal treatment at Bengaluru's High Grounds police station before being shifted to Bengaluru Central Jail, where he spent 15 months. The "aeroplane" punishment, he said, involved having one's hands tied behind the back and being hoisted upward – an ordeal causing unbearable pain

RSS leader Suresh Naik Ankola, who was jailed alongside Kumar, said LK Advani's imprisonment was one of the most symbolic. Then a rising Bharatiya Jana Sangh figure, Advani was arrested shortly after the Emergency began. Initially detained in Delhi, he was transferred to Bengaluru Central Jail, where he spent much of his jail term.

Advani later said his belief in constitutional democracy strengthened during the Emergency when he was jailed.

"The Bengaluru jail became an unlikely incubator of political thought, resilience, and inter-party bonding," Kumar observed.

Despite heavy suppression, silent forms of protest thrived. Underground pamphlets, clandestine poetry, and hushed intellectual resistance echoed through cities like Bengaluru, Dharwad, Mysuru, and Mangaluru.

Kumar said he was arrested while trying to hand a pamphlet to a visiting foreign delegation to alert them about the state of affairs in India.

According to him, a miscalculation by Indira Gandhi's loyalists led her to call for elections in 1977—a decision that proved fatal for the Congress in the north.

"While the Congress was routed elsewhere, it still found solid support in South India, including Karnataka," Kumar noted.

He concluded by invoking Advani's famous remark about institutional complicity during the Emergency: "When they were asked to bend, they began to crawl." *—PTI*

Setting up Waqf portal after talks with states: Govt

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Ministry of Minority Affairs has intensified collaboration with states and union territories to ensure the effective rollout of UMEED portal, which mandates upload of all registered Waqf properties in India within six months. On 21 June, Minority Affairs Secretary Chandra Shekhar Kumar conducted a review meeting in Mumbai with state officials & Maharashtra State Waqf Board CEO. Kumar highlighted impending rules to facilitate the portal's implementation and encouraged suggestions from state authorities. Kumar also assessed projects under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram & congratulated Haj Committee of India on success of Haj 2025, attributing low incident rates to improved coordination & effective Haj Suvidha App. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Naveen Patnaik's cervical surgery successful: Hospital

BHUBANESWAR, 22 JUNE

Naveen Patnaik, the Leader of Opposition in Odisha and BJD President, successfully underwent spine surgery for cervical arthritis at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai. The hospital's CEO, Dr Santosh Shetty, confirmed the procedure's success, stating Patnaik is stable and under observation. Dr Ramakant Panda, overseeing the surgery, noted that the operation took approximately two hours. Following the news, numerous BJD leaders and supporters gathered at temples across Odisha to pray for Patnaik's swift recovery, with many performing rituals. BJD's Vice President Debi Prasad Mishra highlighted Patnaik's widespread popularity, asserting that he is not only a party leader but a beloved figure in Odisha. *—PTI*

Kerala Minister: protests directed by Raj Bhavan

THIRUVAN ANTHAPURAM, 22 JUNE

Kerala's General Education Minister V Sivankutty has accused youth and student organisations affiliated with the BJP of staging protests aimed at inciting riots, stating these actions were directed by the Raj Bhavan. The protests stemmed from Sivankutty's departure from a Raj Bhavan event displaying a portrait of "Bharat Mata". He asserted his right to protest against the Governor's actions, which he claims violate constitutional norms. Protests escalated, with activists from the Yuva Morcha and ABVP reportedly obstructing his vehicle and tearing national flags. He also suggested that two prominent RSS figures within Raj Bhavan are advising the Governor. *—PTI*

Cong appoints new district, city leaders in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

In a major grassroots overhaul, the Congress has appointed new District and City Congress Committee (DCC) Presidents across Gujarat. The appointments follow the Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan, launched in April to revitalise the party structure from booth to district level. AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal said the process emphasised transparent, inclusive, and ideology-based leadership selection. On 12 April, 43 AICC and 183 PCC observers, including MPs and MLAs, were deployed across all 26 Lok Sabha constituencies and 182 assembly segments. They engaged with party workers and local communities to assess organisational needs. The new DCC leaders reflect Gujarat's social diversity and were selected for their grassroots connect and clarity of vision, ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections. *—PTI*

'It's not always smooth ties with neighbours'

Jaishankar says India's neighbours must realise that not working with Indian has a cost

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that India "should not expect smooth sailing" all the time when it comes to its ties with the neighbouring countries.

However, he asserted that New Delhi has tried to create a "collective interest" to build an inherent stability in relationships, irrespective of the regime.

At the end of the day, "the logic every one of our neighbours must realise" is that working with India will "give you benefits", and not working with India "has a cost", he said, without elaborating.

"Some take longer to realise, some understand it better. One exception of course is Pakistan, because it has defined its identity under the army, in a way it has an in-built hostility in it. So if you put Pakistan aside, the logic will apply everywhere else," the EAM said during an interactive session hosted on DD India.

During the conversation, he spoke at length about deepening of ties with countries in India's neighbourhood, and increase in reach out to the Gulf nations, in the last 11 years under PM Narendra Modi, as also deepening of ties with the ASEAN and Indo-Pacific regions.

Modi has "given us a goal" but also in many ways charted a path to get there, EAM said.

Jaishankar also mentioned the ongoing Operation Sindhu launched by India to evacuate its nationals from conflict-hit areas as military confrontation between Israel and Iran intensified.

On counter-terrorism, and India's outlook towards Pakistan, he said the Mumbai attack was in many ways a "turning point". It was probably one of the worst terrorist assaults on any city, and was let "unpunished", the EAM said.

But, Modi government changed that approach with Uri surgical strike, Balakot air strike & Op Sindoor, the EAM said.

The Union Minister described Modi as a "leader of his times".

In the last 11 years of foreign policy, the consistent theme underpinning it is "multipolarity", he asserted. *—PTI*

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar PHOTO: PTI

Indian pilgrims stranded in Tehran seek Centre's help

BALLIA, 22 JUNE

The families of five pilgrims from Rasra town in Ballia district have requested the Indian government's assistance for their safe return from Iran, where they are currently stranded amidst escalating tensions between Israel and Iran.

The group, comprising Syed Asad Ali Bakar, Syed Mohammad Muztaba Hussain, Syed Mohammad, Shama Jahan, and Syed Nazmusqib, reached Iran after earlier visiting Iraq for pilgrimage on 25 May

Despite their current safety in a Tehran hotel, according to Atif, a family member, the situation remains precarious as air services have been suspended, complicating their return to India.

Masiur Rahman, another local who accompanied them, managed to return from Iraq on 7 June. *—PTI*

Despite their current safety in a Tehran hotel, the situation remains precarious as air services have been suspended, complicating their return to India PHOTO: X

Egypt FM's visit to India postponed

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty's two-day visit to India beginning Monday has been called off in view of the escalating tension in the Middle-East following the US's bombing of three major nuclear sites in Iran. Badr was scheduled to hold wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday. The visit of the foreign minister of Egypt has been postponed, said an official. *—PTI*

'AI crash probe may be tedious process'

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The investigation into the tragic Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad on 12 June, which resulted in the deaths of 270 people, including 241 on board, is expected to be a prolonged process due to the extensive damage caused by fire.

Former Director General of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), Group Captain Aurobindo Handa (Retd), emphasised that piecing together evidence will be a challenging task.

"In all probability, the investigation is likely to be a long-drawn process," he stated.

The wreckage of the ill-fated London-bound aircraft, which crashed into a medical college hostel shortly after take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, is currently being shifted to the airport premises for further examination. Gujarat police began moving the wreckage to the GUJSAIL building, where it will be securely stored under the ATAIB's custody.

Gujarat police begins moving the wreckage to the GUJSAIL building, where it will be securely stored under the ATAIB's custody PHOTO: PTI

Meanwhile, in Manipur, thousands gathered to pay their respects to Kongbrailatpam Nganthoi Sharma, an air crew member of the ill-fated flight. Her mortal remains were returned home with profound dignity and sorrow, as community members demonstrated their support.

Authorities have reportedly identified 247 victims through DNA matching, with 232 bodies handed over to their families. A parallel investigation led by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is also in progress, further emphasising the global interest in this devastating incident. *—PTI*

Bomb threat forces AI flight to divert to Riyadh

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

An Air India flight from Birmingham to national capital was diverted to Riyadh due to a bomb threat on Saturday and landed safely in Saudi city. In a statement on Sunday, Tata Group-owned airline, which has temporarily reduced services ensure operational stability, said alternative arrangements are being made to fly passengers from Riyadh to their destinations. In the wake of the fatal crash of its aircraft in Ahmedabad on 12 June, Air India has voluntarily undertaken enhanced pre-flight safety checks and temporary reduction of services to improve stability. The airline also mentioned that sometimes, certain challenges lead to last-minute disruptions. *—PTI*

Int'l flight returns to Chennai due to glitch

CHENNAI, 22 JUNE

A London-bound international flight returned to Chennai shortly after take-off on Sunday due to "operational reasons," affecting approximately 209 passengers. The flight was grounded for around four hours before resuming its journey. Airport officials confirmed that it departed for London around 11.15am. No further details regarding the nature of the operational issue were provided. Passengers experienced an unexpected delay but were ultimately able to continue their journey to the UK. *—PTI*

ARMS SMUGGLER

Punjab terror: NIA chargesheets key aide of Khalistani terrorists

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted Jatinder Singh, a key aide of Babbar Khalsa International terrorist Lakhbir Singh alias Landa and dreaded gangster Pavittar Batala in a Punjab terror conspiracy case, officials said on Sunday.

The chargesheet was filed before a special NIA court in Mohali on Friday,.

Jatinder Singh, hailing from Gurdaspur district of Punjab, was arrested by the NIA from Mumbai on 23 December, last year in the case, according to an official statement.

Jatinder Singh was involved in illegal procurement and supply of firearms from Madhya Pradesh to Punjab-based gangsters, the NIA said.

He was facilitating the supply of weapons to ground operatives of Batala, a close associate of designated individual terrorist Landa, it said.

Batala's foreign-based associates were coordinating Jatinder Singh's operations in India, the NIA said.

The weapons were being used by Batala's operatives in Punjab to promote Babbar Khalsa International's criminal-terror activities, it said.

The NIA investigation revealed that Jatinder Singh used to procure illegal weapons from a known arms supplier, Baljeet Singh alias Rana Bhai, in Madhya Pradesh.

Baljeet Singh had already been arrested and chargesheeted by NIA. The accused were allegedly using virtual numbers and encrypted applications to avoid detection. *–PTI*

- The NIA investigation revealed that Jatinder Singh used to procure illegal weapons from a known arms supplier, Baljeet Singh alias Rana Bhai, in Madhya Pradesh

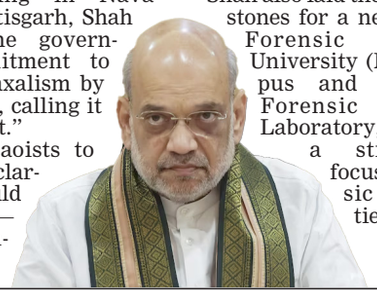
Rain won't slow Naxal mission: Shah

RAIPUR, 22 JUNE

Union Home Secretary Amit Shah on Sunday vowed to maintain pressure on Naxals during the monsoon, breaking with past practice when swollen rivers and dense forests would typically hinder operations. Speaking in Nava Raipur, Chhattisgarh, Shah reaffirmed the government's commitment to eradicating Naxalism by 31 March, 2026, calling it the "31/3 target."

He urged Maoists to surrender, declaring there would be "no talks—only surrender." He highlighted the government's "lucrative" rehabilitation policy and assured those who lay down arms of full support, promising that both the Centre and the Chhattisgarh government would honour all commitments.

Shah also laid the foundation stones for a new National Forensic Science University (NFSU) campus and a Central Forensic Science Laboratory, signalling a strengthened focus on forensic capabilities. *– PTI*



Bihar: EC mulls house-to-house verification

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Election Commission is contemplating intensive house-to-house verification during the revision of electoral rolls for the upcoming Bihar assembly polls due later this year, sources said on Sunday.

Concerns have been raised by various civil society organisations, political parties and others persistently over the inclusion or deletion of names in the electoral rolls. Parties, including the Congress, have accused the poll authority of fudging data to help the BJP.

Officials lamented that despite following a detailed protocol, insinuations and allegations are often made against the EC for arbitrarily inflating the electoral roll, even though the exercise is conducted with complete transparency.

To make the system robust and free of any kind of errors, the poll panel is contemplating an intensive house-to-house verification during the upcoming electoral roll revision before Bihar assembly polls to "purify" the electoral rolls, sources said. *– PTI*

- To make the system robust and free of any kind of errors, the poll panel is contemplating an intensive house-to-house verification during the upcoming electoral roll revision

NILAMBUR BYPOLL

Poll verdict just hours away, it's tense wait for parties

MALAPPURAM, 22 JUNE

With result of the assembly bypoll to Nilambur constituency just hours away, the ruling LDF, opposition UDF and the NDA in Kerala are keeping a close watch as the outcome is seen as a key indicator of the political mood ahead of the 2026 state assembly election.

The counting of votes of the by-election in the forest-fringe constituency, which witnessed a fierce four-cornered fight, would be held on Monday.

Congress-UDF fielded Aryadan Shoukath, former chairman of the Nilambur Municipality, while the CPI(M)-led LDF backed senior leader and state secretariat member M Swaraj.

The BJP-led NDA put up lawyer-politician Mohan George.

The surprise entry of Trinamool Congress state convenor PV Anvar, who had won from the constituency twice as a LDF independent, added intensity and colour to the campaign.

According to the Election Commission, 75.87 per cent voter turnout was registered during the bypoll in Nilambur despite rains and adverse weather conditions.

Of the total 2,32,057 voters, 1,74,667 voters cast their votes in various booths and 1402 exercised their franchise through postal ballots, it said.

Counting arrangements are in full swing.

All sides are confident of a win.

The by-election was necessitated by the rift between LDF-backed independent MLA PV Anvar and the ruling CPI(M).

As the Pinarayi Vijayan government nears end of its second term in office, the by-election in Nilambur has evolved into a prestigious battle for both the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-headed UDF. *– PTI*

M Swaraj, Aryadan Shoukath, PV Anvar, Mohan George PHOTO: xxx

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PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Kerala govt offers Rs 100 crore to stabilise inflation

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 22 JUNE

The Kerala government has announced a Rs 100 crore allocation to the State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) as part of efforts to stabilise the prices of essential commodities.

Finance Minister KN Balagopal stated that this funding would enhance initiatives aimed at curbing the rising costs of vital items in the state. In addition to the Rs 250 crore earmarked in this year's budget for market intervention, this allocation will facilitate the advance procurement of essential goods ahead of the Onam season.

Balagopal pointed out thathat in the past 15 years, the state has provided Rs 7,630 crore to Supplyco for direct market intervention, with LDF governments contributing Rs 7,220 crore, ment's five years in office. *—PTI*

MP mom, kids abducted at gunpoint; 5 held

CHHATARPUR, 22 JUNE

Over a dozen armed men allegedly abducted a woman and her two young daughters, in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district, injuring her husband in the process. The attack occurred on 21 June in Sumedi village, where the assailants arrived on motorcycles and SUVs. Five suspects have been apprehended, and a case has been registered against them, including charges of attempted murder. The police formed five special teams to locate the remaining perpetrators, offering a reward of Rs 10,000 for information. The incident has sparked outrage from the opposition Congress party, which condemned the government's handling of law and order and highlighted the rising crime rates against women. A probe in underway.*—PTI*

Illegal portion of mosque in Delhi demolished

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Authorities commenced the demolition of an illegal section of a mosque in the Mangolpuri area of northwest Delhi on Sunday, following a directive from the Delhi High Court.

The unauthorised construction was being dismantled, amidst a significant police presence.

Seven companies of paramilitary forces were deployed alongside Delhi police personnel on the site. to ensure peace in th area.

The operation reflects continued efforts by city authorities to regulate unlawful constructions, balancing community concerns with legal directives.

Residents had anticipated the demolition, emphasizing the importance of adhering to regulations regarding building structures in their locality. The situation is being monitored closely to prevent any potential clashes during the process. *—PTI*

UP man held for post against Prophet

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 22 JUNE

A 42-year-old man from Shamli district of Uttar Pradesh has been arrested for posting objectionable content against Prophet Mohammed online, a police officer said on Sunday.

Police said Anuj Kumar had posted objectionable content against the Prophet on his WhatsApp status, following which members of the Muslim community protested in Jhinjhana town on 21 June. Jhinjhana Station House Officer Jitendra Sharma said a case was registered against Anuj Kumar under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, following which he was arrested on 21 June. He is being questioned and the matter is under investigation.*—PTI*

Citizens recount dark Emergency period

Post-emergency India shifted from coercive family planning to voluntary participation

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

In the 1970s, before the Emergency, children in some rural areas often ran around unclothed -- until fear gripped families so tightly that even toddlers were dressed, not for modesty, but out of fear of forced sterilisation.

As India marks the 50th anniversary of the Emergency imposed by then prime minister Indira Gandhi on 25 June, 1975, memories of mass sterilisation campaigns continue to haunt survivors even today.

In 1976 over eight million sterilisations, particularly vasectomies, were conducted involuntarily across India.

"It was a dark, dark period ..... my family didn't travel outside Delhi," Ishrat Jahan, a resident of Delhi's Okhla said.

"We were poor but had dignity..... men hid in fields and wells when officials came around," Amina Hasan, now 83 and a resident of Aligarh recalled.

In 'Unsettling Memories', anthropologist Emma Tarlo documents how civil servants, factory workers and police personnel were coerced into undergoing vasectomy.

Former prime minister Indira Gandhi *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

The anti-Emergency slogan, 'Nasbandi ke doot, Indira Gandhi ki loot' (Agents of sterilisation, Indira Gandhi's loot) summed up the sentiment.

In 1976, people opened fire on residents of Delhi's Turkman Gate for resisiting demolitions for urban 'beautification' drives and refused to undergo sterilisation.

Entire families were displaced and homes were razed.

Poonam Muttreja, executive director of the Population Foundation of India, said coercive measures set back reproductive rights for both men and women.

India shifted from coercive family planning to voluntary participation. Today, female sterilisation accounts for the majority of procedures.

Some states proposed limiting government benefits to families with only two children.

Experts opined that unmet need for contraception should be addressed, while improving healthcare access and empowering women.

– PTI

"The torture in police stations was even worse than in jail. I was already active in student politics as the joint secretary of my college, but the Emergency was our real test. Many were afraid to go to jail -- we weren't. That made us stronger

-Vijay Goel, former union minister of state for parliamentary affairs

When Janata Dal banned Coca Cola

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

In 1977, following the end of India's Emergency and the Congress's defeat, the Janata Party banned Coca-Cola for refusing to share its formula and comply with foreign ownership laws. Industry Minister George Fernandes spearheaded the move, championing economic self-reliance. In its place, the government launched "Double Seven", an indigenous cola developed by CFTRI and marketed by Modern Food Industries. Named after the pivotal political year, it debuted at Pragati Maidan. Despite patriotic fervour, Double Seven couldn't rival Coca-Cola or Thums Up, and faded when Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980.

—PTI

Emergency saw 48 ordinances

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

During the 21-month Emergency imposed on 25 June, 1975, the Indira Gandhi government issued 48 ordinances, including five to amend the draconian MISA law, allowing detention without trial. Parliament functioned briefly, mainly to ratify ordinances, with most opposition MPs jailed. Key changes included curbing judicial powers, extending

Lok Sabha's term twice, and amending the Constitution to insert 'socialist', 'secular', and 'integrity' into the Preamble. The controversial 42nd Amendment was later overturned by the 44th Amendment. MISA was repealed in 1978 following criticism of its misuse. —PTI

Stealth frigate INS Tamal *PHOTO: X/DEFENCE*

INS Tamal to be commissioned into Indian Navy on 1 July

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Indian Navy's Russian-manufactured guided missile frigate INS Tamal will be commissioned into the force at Russia's coastal city of Kaliningrad on 1 July.

The ship has 26 per cent indigenous components, including the BrahMos long-range cruise missile for targeting both at sea and land.

The warship has been built at Yantar shipyard in Kaliningrad.

The commissioning ceremony will be presided over by Vice Admiral Sanjay J Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command. Several senior Indian and Russian defence officials will be present.

India is building two similar frigates called the INS Triput class at Goa Shipyard Ltd with transfer of technology and design assistance from Russia.

Indian Navy will operate 10 ships with similar capabilities and commonality in equipment, weapon and sensor fit over four different classes.

At the Naval headquarters, the project was steered by the Directorate of Ship Production under the Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition.

The ship has significant upgrades in its arsenal, such as vertical launched surface-to-air missiles, improved 100 MM gun, heavyweight torpedoes, urgent-attack anti-submarine rockets, and surveillance radars. Its combat capability is augmented by network-centric warfare capabilities and advanced electronic warfare suite. *—PTI*

50 Odisha villages flooded; 1 missing

BALASORE, 22 JUNE

One person went missing after being swept away by flood water as over 50 villages remained marooned even as the water level of the Subarnarekha river receded below the danger mark on Sunday.

A young man from Bishnupur gram panchayat area in the district went missing after being swept away by the floodwaters on 21 June. ODRAF personnel have launched a rescue operation.

Baliapal, Bhograi, Basta and Jaleswar blocks were inundated as authorities of Chandil Dam in Jharkhand allegedly released excess water without informing Odisha, Balasore MP Pratap Sarangi alleged terming it a "criminal misconduct".

The flash flood has affected over 50,000 people in the four blocks of Balasore district. However, the administration hopes that the situation will now improve as the water level of Subarnarekha has started receding. The water level at 10 am on Sunday, was 9.94m against the danger mark of 10.36 metre at Rajgaht. The highest water level was above 11m on Saturday, officials said.

A low-lying area flooded by water from swollen Subarnarekha river, at a village in Balasore district, Odisha *PHOTO: PTI*

Flood water has already entered into villages and agricultural fields and it may require around four/ five days to recover from the flood situation, officials said. *—PTI*

NGT raps CPCB on Bihar deaths due to lightning

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has requested a response from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and relevant authorities regarding the alarming rise in lightning-related fatalities in Bihar, attributed to the extensive felling of palm trees. The inquiry was prompted by a newspaper report that highlighted concerns over the cutting down of these trees, resulting in over 2,000 lightning-related deaths since 2016.

In an order issued on 5 June, the NGT noted that the eradication of towering palm trees could be increasing the frequency of lightning strikes. Following a ban on toddy tapping, palm trees lost their economic significance, leading to widespread deforestation and ecological loss.

Aurangabad, Patna, and Rohtas recorded more deaths. The matter will be heard on 7 August in Kolkata. *—PTI*

Sickle cell screening cuts child mortality to 5%

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

A five-year ICMR study has found that early diagnosis and treatment of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) through newborn screening can reduce child mortality from 20–30 per cent to under 5 per cent. Conducted from 2019 to 2024 by the National Institute of Immunohematology in Mumbai, the study screened 63,536 newborns across seven high-prevalence centres in India, with 57 per cent from tribal communities.

569 babies (0.9 per cent) had SCD and 7,275 (11.4 per cent) were carriers. Affected infants received penicillin prophylaxis, folic acid, key vaccinations, and hydroxyurea where needed. Early detection helped prevent severe infections, anaemia, and strokes, and enabled timely specialist care, genetic counselling, and improved management.

The study, coordinated by Harpreet Kaur, also explored regional genetic variation and barriers to implementing newborn screening.Integrating SCD screening into national health policy is vital. *—PTI*

HONEYMOON MURDER

Security guard, property dealer held honeymoon

SHILLONG, 22 JUNE

A special investigation team (SIT) of the Meghalaya Police on Sunday picked up a security guard in Madhya Pradesh, following the arrest of a property dealer on 21 June in the murder of Indore businessman Raja Raghuvanshi.

The property dealer was arrested for concealing a bag belonging to Raghuvanshi's wife Sonam, who hid it in a flat in Indore after the murder.

The total number of people arrested in the case rose to seven.

The Meghalaya police arrested property dealer, Silome James from Bhonrasa toll-gate in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district while he was trying to flee to Bhopal. He had leased a flat to co-accused Vishal Chauhan in Indore where Sonam had stayed and kept her belongings.

- Asked The SIT on 21 June arrested a property dealer for concealing a bag belonging to Raghuvanshi's wife Sonam, who hid it in a flat in Indore after the murder.

The security guard, Balla Ahirwar was arrested from his village. Both will appear in a Indore court seeking a transit remand to Shillong.*—PTI*

Delhi cops bust fake Bisleri bottle racket

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Delhi Police has busted a counterfeit Bisleri bottle racket operating in northwest Delhi's Shakurpur area and arrested two men,.

The accused were allegedly manufacturing and selling fake water bottles using forged packaging of the brand.

The accused, identified as Sikander, 30, and Ashish, 19, both residents of Shakurpur, were apprehended during a raid. They had set up an illegal unit to manufacture and market fake water bottles for profit, endangering public health and violating property rights.

The raid followed a complaint from the company's representatives regarding the unauthorised use of their brand labels and packaging.

The police teams recovered 26 twenty-litre bottles branded with fake stickers, caps and barcodes. The accused confessed to running the fake bottling unit since 2024. *—PTI*

AFTER 5 YEARS

SpiceJet to pay man 25k for wrong ticket

MUMBAI, 22 JUNE

A consumer commission here has held that a senior citizen suffered "monetarily and mentally" after SpiceJet issued incorrect tickets while rerouting his journey in 2020, and directed the airline to pay a compensation of Rs 25,000 to the passenger.

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Mumbai (Suburban) held the budget carrier guilty of "deficient service and negligent behaviour" for the error which caused "mental harassment" to the passenger.

The commission directed the airline to pay the passenger Rs 25,000 as compensation for mental agony and Rs 5,000 for the litigation cost.

The airline had made an alternate booking- where the wrong ticket was issued- after his initial flight was cancelled due to bad weather. The complainant was reimbursed for the same.

The commission acknowledged that the flight cancellation was beyond the control of the airline, and the Air Traffic Control had taken the decision in view of the passengers' safety.

However, the said ticket was incorrect and thereby the complainant suffered "monetarily and mentally", it said.

The commission further stated the complainant also "acted negligently" as the mistake could have been rectified on the spot had he checked the ticket.

The complainant, a senior citizen of Mumbai's Ghatkopar area booked Spicejet tickets from Mumbai to Darbhanga for 5 December,2020, and a return journey two days later.

The return flight was cancelled due to bad weather.

SpiceJet then provided an alternate ticket from Patna to Kolkata and then Kolkata to Mumbai, which was incorrect.

He missed his online Phd examination due to delayed arrival in Mumbai. *—PTI*

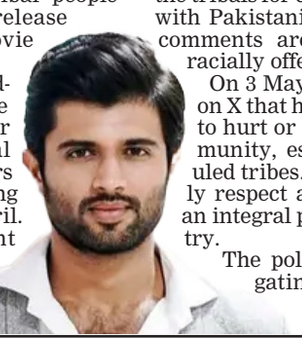
Vijay Devarakonda booked for comments on tribals

HYDERABAD, 22 JUNE

A case was registered against actor Vijay devarakonda under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, for his alleged remarks about tribal people during a pre-release event of the movie 'Retro' here.

The actor allegedly compared the Pahalgam terror attack to tribal wars from 500 years ago while speaking at the event in April.

The complaint filed by Nenavath Ashok Kumar Naik Alias Ashok Rathod, state president of Joint Action Committee of Tribal Communities, alleged that the movie actor's comments hurt the sentiments of the tribals for comparing them with Pakistani terrorists. His comments are perceived as racially offensive



On 3 May, the actor said on X that he did not intend to hurt or target any community, especially scheduled tribes. whom he deeply respect and consider as an integral part of the country.

The police are investigating the case.

—PTI

END THE BLOODSHED

Activists and Iranians march during a solidarity rally for Palestinians demanding to stop the attack on Iran by the US and Israel, in Seoul, South Korea, on Sunday
PHOTO: PTI

With US' attack on Iran, fears of regional war grows

The United States has formally entered Israel's war against Iran, striking three of the Islamic Republic's major nuclear sites in a dramatic overnight operation. President Donald Trump described the strikes as "completely and fully obliterating" the facilities and warned Iran that any retaliation would trigger further attacks.

This marked a dangerous escalation in an already volatile conflict that began on 13 June with Israeli strikes on Iranian military and nuclear infrastructure. The war has since killed hundreds across both countries and left thousands injured.

Here is what you need to know about the current state of the Israel-Iran conflict and the implications of US military involvement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shows an illustration as he describes his concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions
PHOTO: PTI

Israel strikes first

The current round of hostilities erupted on 13 June, when Israel launched a surprise wave of attacks targeting Iranian nuclear and military installations. Several high-ranking Iranian military officials and nuclear scientists were killed.

Iran responded by unleashing a barrage of hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel. Despite Israel's multi-layered air defence system, some managed to strike populated areas, resulting in two dozen deaths and hundreds of injuries. In Iran, Israeli attacks have reportedly killed hundreds and wounded over 1,000.

Although Iran maintains that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, Israel considers it an existential threat.

Israeli leadership has long warned that it would not allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons and argues that military action is necessary to prevent that outcome.

US intelligence agencies have assessed that Iran is not actively building a nuclear bomb. However, both Trump and Israeli officials claim Iran could rapidly assemble one, creating an imminent threat.

US launches direct strikes on Iran

In a televised address from the White House, President Trump confirmed that the US had launched "massive precision strikes" on Iran's Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz nuclear facilities. He hailed the operation as a "spectacular military success" and stated that Iran now faced a choice: peace or "tragedy."

The US strikes utilised bunker-buster bombs targeting deeply buried infrastructure, particularly the Fordo site, which lies beneath a mountain. A US official, speaking anonymously, confirmed that only the United States possesses the 30,000-pound munition and the stealth bombers capable of delivering it. In addition, around 30 Tomahawk cruise missiles were reportedly fired from US submarines.

The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization acknowledged the attacks but insisted they would not halt the country's nuclear programme. The UN's nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, and Iranian officials reported no immediate radioactive contamination at the affected sites. Trump warned that any Iranian retaliation would provoke additional US strikes. "There will either be peace or there will be tragedy for Iran," he declared.

Iran vows retaliation

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi issued a stern warning via X (formerly Twitter), stating the US strikes would have "everlasting consequences" and that Iran "reserves all options" to respond.

Iran followed up with a missile attack on areas in northern and central Israel, injuring at least 16 people and damaging buildings, according to Israeli emergency services. The Israeli military claimed to have quickly neutralised the launch sites in western Iran and initiated a series of counter-strikes.

Iran's Foreign Ministry described the US strikes as a direct act of war, calling the United States a "rogue regime." The ministry said Iran would resist with full force to protect its sovereignty and national interests.

Global alarm and risk of regional war

The strikes have triggered global alarm. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said he was "gravely alarmed" by the US's use of force and called it a "dangerous escalation." In a statement posted to X, he warned that the conflict could spiral out of control, with "catastrophic consequences for civilians, the region, and the world."

"There is no military solution. The only path forward is diplomacy," Guterres said.

World leaders have echoed those concerns, urging all parties to exercise restraint and return to diplomatic engagement.

In Yemen, Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, who had previously threatened to resume Red Sea attacks if the US entered the conflict, called on Muslim nations to unite in a "single front against Zionist-American arrogance." The Houthis, a key Iranian proxy, may now escalate regional tensions further by attacking US or allied shipping.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had issued a warning days before the strikes, saying US military action would bring "irreparable damage" to America.

A long war ahead?

The Israeli military stated over the weekend that it is preparing for the possibility of a prolonged war.

Iran's foreign minister, speaking prior to the US strikes, warned that American involvement would be "very, very dangerous for everyone."

With multiple flashpoints across the Middle East and powerful militaries now openly clashing, the risk of a broader regional war has dramatically increased. *—PTI*

SALAR

Iran faces grim choices as it vows to retaliate

Iran has spent decades constructing a multi-layered military apparatus both at home and through regional proxies, a strategy partially aimed at deterring direct conflict with the United States. But now, with the US entering Israel's war against Iran, Tehran may have lost its last reason to keep those assets in reserve.

This shift could spark a wave of retaliatory attacks on American forces in the Middle East, efforts to disrupt global oil flows via the Strait of Hormuz, or even a renewed push toward developing nuclear weapons, particularly after recent US strikes on key Iranian nuclear and military sites.

Should Iran decide to retaliate, it would suddenly have a broader range of nearby targets. US military installations and regional allies sit much closer than Israel, placing them well within range of Iranian missiles and drones. Though the US and Israel possess far superior military capabilities, history has shown that such advantages do not always translate into decisive victories — especially in the Middle East's unpredictable and volatile conflict zones.

The question now is whether Tehran's repeated warnings to Washington were bluster or a grim forecast of what is to come.

The Strait of Homruz

The Strait of Hormuz, a strategic chokepoint at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, sees the passage of nearly 20 per cent of all globally traded oil. At its narrowest, it spans just 33km. Any disruption there would likely cause oil prices to spike and rattle global markets.

Iran possesses a fleet of fast-attack craft and thousands of naval mines capable of rendering the strait impassable, even if temporarily. Missiles launched from Iran's long Persian Gulf coastline, as demonstrated by its Yemeni allies, the Houthis, in the Red Sea, could further disrupt the flow of oil tankers.

The US Navy's 5th Fleet, based in Bahrain, is tasked with securing the strait and would almost certainly respond with force. However, even a short-lived confrontation could halt shipping, alarm investors, and escalate pressure on all sides to seek a ceasefire.

Attack on US bases

With tens of thousands of troops stationed at bases across Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, the US has a significant regional footprint, all located just across the Gulf from Iran. These bases have sophisticated air defences but would face shorter warning times than Israel in the event of an Iranian missile or drone barrage.

Iran could also opt to strike vital oil and gas infrastructure in Gulf states to impose economic costs for US involvement. A 2019 drone attack on Saudi oil facilities, claimed by the Houthis but widely attributed to Iran, temporarily slashed the kingdom's oil production by half, highlighting the vulnerability of even heavily defended sites.

Activating the 'Axis of Resistance'

Iran's so-called "Axis of Resistance", a network of aligned militant groups across the Middle East, has been weakened since the start of Israel's war in Gaza, but it still retains some capacity for disruption.

The war has devastated Palestinian factions such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and Israel's autumn offensive against Hezbollah inflicted severe damage, killing many top leaders and damaging large swathes of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah's ability to engage in large-scale operations is now limited.

Nonetheless, Iran can still call on the Houthis in Yemen, who have threatened to resume Red Sea attacks if the US became directly involved in the conflict. Iran-backed militias in Iraq also possess the means to target American forces with drones and missiles. Tehran could also return to asymmetrical attacks abroad, a tactic it is widely believed to have used in the 1990s, including the bombing of a Jewish centre in Argentina.

A dash for nuclear weapons?

The full consequences of the recent US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities may not be immediately clear. However, analysts have long argued that even a coordinated American-Israeli air campaign would only delay, not dismantle, Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Iran has dispersed its nuclear infrastructure across several fortified and often underground locations, making it difficult to destroy comprehensively. While repair efforts will be hampered by the presence of Western warplanes, Iran could respond by fully halting cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), following the precedent set by North Korea in 2003.

Though Iran continues to insist its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, it remains the only non-nuclear state enriching uranium up to 60 per cent purity — just a short step from the 90 per cent needed for weapons-grade material. US intelligence agencies and the IAEA maintain that Iran has not had an organised nuclear weapons programme since 2003. *—PTI*

A rescue worker evacuates two children from the site where a missile launched from Iran struck Haifa, Israel, on Sunday
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Trump's move draws criticism from MAGA's anti-interventionists

President Donald Trump's decision to launch precision strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities has exposed, and in some cases softened, ideological rifts within his "Make America Great Again" movement, highlighting tensions between his longstanding anti-interventionist stance and the reality of military action abroad.

The attack on three major Iranian nuclear sites — Fordo, Isfahan, and Natanz — was hailed by Trump as a "spectacular military success." Yet, it also challenged the principles many of his most influential supporters have long championed: chiefly, an end to what they call America's "forever wars."

In the days leading up to the strikes, key MAGA figures, including former Trump adviser Steve Bannon, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, commentator Tucker Carlson, and Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk, voiced strong concerns about the prospect of US military involvement in the Israel-Iran conflict.

But after the strikes, some of those same voices recalibrated their stance, revealing the complexity of balancing ideological consistency with loyalty to the former president.

Cracks in the MAGA core

Trump's America First doctrine has always prioritised avoiding new foreign entanglements, a position that resonated with millions of voters still disillusioned by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This made the Iran strikes particularly controversial among his core base, which includes many anti-interventionists.

Steve Bannon, a chief architect of Trump's 2016 campaign, addressed the discomfort directly during a speech in Washington last week. He described scepticism of foreign wars as "a core tenet" of the MAGA platform, rooted in the lessons of Iraq. Still, he predicted that Trump's loyalists would ultimately "get on board."

"We don't like it. Maybe we hate it," Bannon said. "But… the MAGA movement will back Trump."

Even while expressing unease, Bannon signalled that Trump had the political capital to navigate the moment, provided he made his case to the American people.

Carlson's Public Rebuke, Then a Private Apology

Tucker Carlson, once one of Trump's closest media allies, was openly critical in the days before the strikes. He argued the move betrayed Trump's previous commitment to avoid new wars. The tension escalated when Trump labelled Carlson "kooky" on social media, prompting Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene to leap to the commentator's defence. But according to Trump, Carlson called to apologise soon after the strikes were announced. At a White House event on Wednesday, Trump dismissed the friction, calling Carlson "a nice guy."

Shattered rooms are seen in an apartment building at the site of a direct missile strike launched from Iran in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Sunday
PHOTO: PTI

Carlson's dispute with Sen. Ted Cruz also illustrated a deeper ideological divide within the Republican Party. In a public forum, the two sparred over US policy toward Iran, with Carlson accusing Cruz of prioritising Israel's security over informed decision-making.

"You're a senator who's calling for the overthrow of a government, and you don't know anything about the country," Carlson charged, highlighting concerns about reckless escalation.

Greene and the MAGA anti-war wing

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., remained firmly against intervention, even after the strikes. A staunch Trump ally, Greene took issue with the president's rebuke of Carlson and reiterated her opposition to American involvement in foreign wars. Posting to X hours before the attack, she warned, "Every time America is on the verge of greatness, we get involved in another foreign war." After the strikes, she urged Americans to "pray for peace," underlining her view that the conflict is not America's to fight.

Greene encapsulated the frustration of a MAGA base that had supported Trump for his anti-war messaging. "That's not kooky," she wrote of Carlson's stance. "That's what millions of Americans voted for."

Alex Jones paints a stark contrast

Far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones echoed these concerns visually. Posting a side-by-side comparison of Trump's presidential photo and an AI-generated composite of Trump and George W. Bush, he warned that Trump could be falling into the same trap as the architects of past US wars in the Middle East.

Above the official photo, Jones wrote, "What you voted for." Above the manipulated image: "What you got." His caption added, "I hope this is not the case…" The implication was clear: Trump, once an opponent of Bush-era foreign policy, now risked repeating its mistakes.

Kirk's swift shift

Charlie Kirk, founder of Turning Point USA, was another voice who initially cautioned against escalation. Early in the week, he said Trump's strength lay in being the first president in decades not to start a new war. He warned that many young MAGA voters were wary of another costly Middle East conflict. "There is historically little support for America to be actively engaged in yet another offensive war," Kirk said. "The last thing America needs right now is a new war."

But just an hour after Trump announced the strikes, Kirk praised the president for acting "with prudence and decisiveness." He argued that Iran had left the US no choice and reposted an old Trump tweet from 2011 warning of Iran's nuclear ambitions. "When Trump speaks, you should listen," Kirk concluded, in a stark reversal of tone.

The future of 'America first'?

With Trump constitutionally barred from a third term, the longevity of the "America First" brand — and whether it can remain consistently non-interventionist — is an open question. The Iran strikes may well become a defining moment in how the movement evolves post-Trump. As Trump flexes American military muscle in support of Israel, the ideological tug-of-war within MAGA intensifies. While many still rally behind him, others are wrestling with what they see as a shift away from the foundational anti-war stance that helped define his identity. *—PTI*

US does not seek war, says Hegseth

Israel destroys Iran's F-5 jets at Dezful airport; releases footage of strike

WASHINGTON, 22 NOV

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said Sunday that America "does not seek war" with Iran in the aftermath of a surprise attack overnight on three of that country's nuclear sites while Vice President JD Vance said the strikes have given Tehran a renewed chance of negotiating with Washington.

The mission, called 'Operation Midnight Hammer,' involved decoys and deception, and met with no Iranian resistance, Hegseth and Air Force Gen Dan Caine, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at a Pentagon news conference.

"This mission was not and has not been about regime change," Hegseth added.

Hegseth said that a choice to move a number of B-2 bombers from their base in Missouri earlier Saturday was meant to be a decoy to throw off Iranians. He added that the US used other methods of deception as well, deploying fighters to protect the B-2 bombers that dropped 14 bunker-buster bombs on Iran's site at Fordo.

Caine said the goal of the operation — destroying nuclear sites in Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan — had been achieved.

Flanked by US Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, President Donald Trump addresses media at the White House, after Saturday's strikes on Iran **PHOTO: PTI**

"Final battle damage will take some time, but initial battle damage assessments indicate that all three sites sustained extremely severe damage and destruction," Caine said.

Vance said in a television interview that while he would not discuss "sensitive intelligence about what we've seen on the ground," he felt "very confident that we've substantially delayed their development of a nuclear weapon."

He added, "I think that we have really pushed their programme back by a very long time. I think that it's going to be many many years before the Iranians are able to develop a nuclear weapon."

Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi meanwhile, said Sunday that Washington was "fully responsible" for whatever actions Tehran may take in response. "They crossed a very big red line by attacking nuclear facilities," he said. "I don't know how much room is left for diplomacy."

Meanwhile Israel said it hit F-5 aircrafts at Iran's Dezful airport. The F-5s are part of Iran's aging fleet of fighter jets from the era of the shah. Israel released black-and-white footage showing one of the aircraft being destroyed.

Israel previously hit F-14 Tomcats flown by the Iranian military in the war. However, it isn't clear if these aircraft were airworthy as many have been grounded over the years due to a lack of parts. Israel also said it struck other sites, including around Isfahan's airport. Iran has not acknowledged losses of aircraft or other materiel in the war so far. This comes as Israeli strikes on Iran have killed at least 865 people and wounded 3,396 others, a human rights group said Sunday.

Washington-based group Human Rights Activists said it identified 363 civilians and 215 security personnel among the dead. *—PTI*

Iran wants emergency meeting of UNSC

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations called for an emergency Security Council meeting for what he described as America's "heinous attacks and illegal use of force". In a letter Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani, said that the UN's most powerful body must "take all necessary measures" to hold the US accountable under international law and the UN charter.

Israel finds remains of 3 more Gaza hostages

The Israeli military said on Sunday that it has recovered the remains of three hostages held in the Gaza Strip. At least four Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike and 22 wounded while waiting for humanitarian aid, according to a local hospital. The military identified the remains as those of Yonatan Samerano, 21; Ofra Keidar, 70; and Shay Levinson, 19.

Now, a nuke race likely: Russian lawmaker

Deputy chair of Russia's Federation Council's International Affairs Committee Andrei Klimov said on Sunday that the direct armed intervention by the US in Iran will increase global escalation, and many countries will begin to create nuclear weapons and hypersonic missiles. "The world has moved up another rung on the ladder of global escalation," he said.

Iran detains journo's kin over war coverage

Iran detained the family members of an Iran International journalist on Saturday in retaliation for the channel's coverage of the country's war with Israel, threatening to hold them until the journalist resigned from her position. The London-based Farsi news channel said in a statement that it strongly condemns the abduction of its journalist's family.

HOW US DEVASTATED IRAN'S 'SAFE' FORDO

US unleashed its massive "bunker-buster" bombs on Iran's Fordo nuclear plant. These bombs, launched from B2 stealth fighter jets, were the only weapons capable of destroying Fordo, built deep into a mountain. Here are the details:

Target: Fordo

Iran's 2nd nuclear enrichment facility after its main facility Natanz.

Location: Built 80m underground on a mountain, 95km from Tehran.

Who protects it? Iranian and Russian surface-to-air missile systems. But these were likely destroyed.

WEAPONS US USED TO DESTROY IT

Bunker-buster bombs

GBU-57 A/B Massive Ordnance Penetrator bomb is the most powerful bunker buster the US has. US is the only one with this technology.

Precision-guided bomb, designed to attack deep bunkers and tunnels.

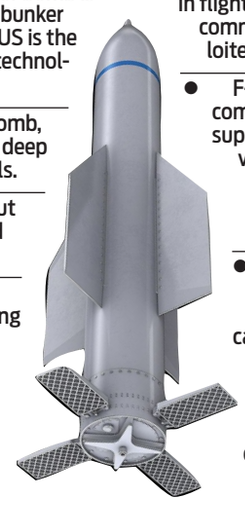
Can penetrate about 200ft underground before exploding.

Are dropped one after another, drilling deeper with each blast.

Weight: 13,600kg

Length: 20ft

Diameter: 2.6ft



B-2 bomber planes

Costing $2.1B, it is the most expensive plane ever built.

Stealth jets, with low infrared, acoustic, electromagnetic, visual and radar signatures.

Can carry a payload of 18,000kg

Range of 11,000km without refuelling.

Only US aircraft configured to carrying the bunker-buster bombs

Supporting arsenal

- US Navy launched 30 Tomahawk Cruise Missiles. These can change targets in flight through satellite communication and loiter over a target.
- F-22 Raptor plane combines stealth, supercruise, manoeuvrability, integrated avionics and improved supportability.
- F-35A Lightning fighters have high-end stealth capabilities, designed to carry out precision strikes in all-weather conditions.

In Operation Rising Lion, Israel has done truly amazing things. But in tonight's action, America has been truly unsurpassed. It has done what no other country on earth could do. Trump and I often say, 'Peace through strength.' First comes strength, then comes peace

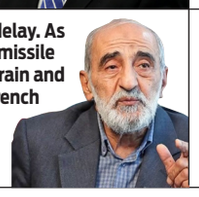
—Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister

The warmongering, a lawless administration in Washington is solely and fully responsible for the dangerous consequences and far reaching implications of its act of aggression... I will have serious consultations with the Russian President tomorrow

—Abbas Araghchi, Iranian Foreign Minister

It is now our turn to act without delay. As the first step, we must launch a missile strike on the US naval fleet in Bahrain and American, British, German and French ships close the Strait of Hormuz

–Hossein Shariatmadari, Iranian Supreme Leader's representative



We devastated the Iranian nuclear programme. This is a plan that took months and weeks of positioning and preparation. When this (US) President speaks, the world should listen

-Pete Hegseth, US Defence Secretary

World reacts to US strikes with praise and fear

DUBAI, 22 JUNE

Countries reacted to US' involvement on Sunday with both praise and condemnation. Some questioned whether a weakened Iran would capitulate or remain defiant and begin striking with allies at US targets scattered across the Gulf region.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said he was "gravely alarmed" by the use of force by the United States.

"There is a growing risk that this conflict could rapidly get out of control – with catastrophic consequences for civilians, the region, and the world," he said.

Both the Houthi rebels in Yemen and Hamas condemned the US. The Houthis vowed to support Iran in its fight against "the Zionist and American aggression".

Hamas and the Houthis are part of Iran's so-called "Axis of Resistance", the collection of pro-Iranian proxies stretching from Yemen to Lebanon.

Pakistan, meanwhile, condemned the attacks, saying that it "violates norms of international law." Other Muslim nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and Oman also condemned the strikes.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, meanwhile, said the bombing could lead to a regional conflict that no country could bear.

Lebanon's new leadership, which came after Israel and the Hezbollah's militant group's devastating war, urged that the country avoids being dragged into more conflict as it tries to rebuild itself.

Meanwhile, China strongly condemned the attacks, saying the strikes were a serious violation of the UN Charter and heightens tensions in West Asia. *—PTI*

FedEx founder Fred Smith dies at age of 80

MEMPHIS, 22 JUNE

Fred Smith, the visionary founder of FedEx Corp., has passed away at the age of 80, the company announced. Smith revolutionised the express delivery industry when FedEx began operations in 1973, offering quicker parcel deliveries than traditional postal services. Under his leadership, the Memphis-based company evolved into a global logistics giant, managing approximately 17 million shipments daily. Smith's innovative "hub and spoke" distribution model redefined American business practices, promoting time-sensitive deliveries. A Yale University graduate and US Marine Corps veteran, Smith drew on his military experiences to guide his business principles. *—PTI*

Turkey grills scribe for 'threatening' President Erdogan

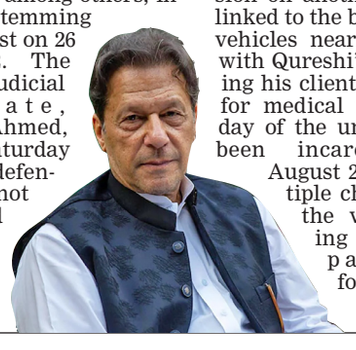
ISTANBUL, 22 JUNE

Turkish authorities detained a prominent journalist for allegedly "threatening" President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, according to state media. The detention of Fatih Altayli, whose daily commentaries on YouTube attract hundreds of thousands of viewers, comes amid a widespread crackdown on the opposition. State-run Anadolu Agency said he was questioned after his detention late Saturday over a comment made following a recent poll that showed more than 70 per cent of the public opposed a lifetime Presidency for Erdogan. On his YouTube channel, Altayli said Friday he wasn't surprised by the result and that the Turkish people preferred checks on authority. During questioning, Altayli denied threatening the President. *—PTI*

Several leaders of Imran Khan's PTI get court relief

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE, 22 JUNE

Several senior leaders from former prime minister Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), have received legal reprieve from courts concerning protest-related charges. A court in Islamabad acquitted PTI Chairman Gohar Ali Khan and Leader of the Opposition Omar Ayub, among others, in two cases stemming from a protest on 26 April, 2022. The Islamabad Judicial Magistrate, Shahzad Ahmed, ruled on Saturday that the defendants had not violated Section 144 or other legal provisions during the protest, which began at PTI leader Shoaib Shaheen's office and moved towards the Karachi Company.



In a separate case, an anti-terrorism court in Lahore granted bail to former Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, related to the riots on 9 May, 2023, which erupted following Khan's arrest.

The court deferred its decision on another bail petition linked to the burning of police vehicles near Lahore Corps, with Qureshi's lawyer asserting his client was in Karachi for medical reasons on the day of the unrest. Khan has been incarcerated since August 2023, facing multiple charges linked to the violence following his arrest by paramilitary forces. *—PTI*

Japan, S Korea mark 60 yrs of ties

TOKYO, 22 JUNE

Japan and South Korea are commemorating the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic normalisation, a milestone overshadowed by historical grievances stemming from Japan's colonial rule over Korea in the early 20th century.

In Seoul, President Lee Jae Myung is keen to differentiate his administration from the previous government's controversial policies. Despite attempts by former President Yoon Suk Yeol to mend relations with Japan—culminating in a South Korea-funded compensation plan for colonial-era forced labourers—resentment persists due to Japan's perceived lack of sincere acknowledgment of historical wrongs.

As the 15 August anniversary of Korea's liberation approaches, there are calls in Seoul for Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to issue a stronger statement of remorse.

In Tokyo, Ishiba has expressed a desire to enhance diplomatic ties, acknowledging Japan's wartime actions while seeking cooperation on issues like North Korean threats. Amidst rising tariffs from the US under President Trump, experts emphasise the necessity for South Korea and Japan to collaborate to safeguard their trade-dependent economies. Ishiba remains optimistic about the future of their relationship, identifying "common challenges" that may strengthen their partnership. *—PTI*

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba meets South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in Kananaskis, Canada, during G7 summit **PHOTO: X**

- In Seoul, President Lee Jae Myung is keen to differentiate his administration from the previous government's controversial policies

CHINESE 'SUPER EMBASSY' IN LONDON SOON

LONDON, 22 JUNE

The proposed Chinese "super embassy" planned for central London is expected to gain approval from the UK government, following a favourable report from the Planning Inspectorate, according to The Sunday Times.

Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Secretary Angela Rayner is anticipated to greenlight the ambitious project at the historic Royal Mint Court, close to the Tower of London. The plans faced initial opposition due to espionage concerns but were revived after lobbying by China, culminating in a public inquiry in February. Residents near the proposed site are preparing for a legal challenge, citing fears over safety and security.

The embassy aims to replace China's existing premises in Portland Place, which critics argue is inadequate for the nation's diplomatic needs. *—PTI*

POSTED GRUESOME VIDEOS ONLINE

Russia-linked Wagner accused of war-crimes in West Africa

DAKAR, 22 JUNE

The International Criminal Court was asked to review a confidential legal report asserting that the Russia-linked Wagner Group has committed war crimes by spreading images of apparent atrocities in West Africa on social media, including ones alluding to cannibalism, according to the brief seen exclusively by The Associated Press.

In the videos, men in military uniform are shown butchering corpses of what appear to be civilians with machetes, hacking out organs and posing with severed limbs.

One fighter in a video says he is about to eat someone's liver. Another says he is trying to remove their heart.

Violence in the Sahel, an arid belt of land south of the Sahara Desert, has reached record levels as military governments battle extremist groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

Turning from Western allies like the US and France, the governments in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have instead embraced Russia and its mercenary fighters as partners in offensives.

Observers say the new approach has led to the kind of atrocities and dehumanisation not seen in the region for decades. Social media offers a window into the alleged horrors that often occur in remote areas with little or no oversight from governments or outside observers. Experts say the images, while difficult to verify, could serve as evidence of war crimes. The confidential brief to the ICC goes further, arguing that the act of circulating the images on social media could constitute a war crime, too. It is the first such argument made to the international court.

World's deadliest region

As the world largely focuses on wars in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan, Sahel has become the deadliest place on earth for extremism, accounting for half of the world's nearly 8,000 terror victims.

The brief asks the ICC to investigate individuals with Wagner and the governments of Mali and Russia for alleged abuses in northern and central Mali between December 2021 and July 2024, including extrajudicial killings, torture, mutilation and cannibalism. It also asks the court to investigate crimes "committed through the internet, which are inextricably linked to the physical crimes and add a new dimension of harm to an extended group of victims." *—PTI*

Experts say the online content, while difficult to verify, could serve as evidence of war crimes **PHOTO: X**

Iran–Israel War: India ups oil imports

Indian refiners are likely to purchase from Russia, US 2.64 million barrels per day

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

India has ramped up purchases of Russian oil in June, importing more than the combined volumes from Middle Eastern suppliers such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq, amid market volatility triggered by Israel's dramatic attack on Iran.

US military struck three sites in Iran early Sunday, directly joining Israel which first struck Iranian nuclear sites on 13 June.

India is likely to import 2-2.2 million barrels per day of Russian crude oil in June – the highest in the last two years and more than the total volumes bought from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait, preliminary data by global trade analytics firm Kpler showed. India's oil imports from Russia were 1.96 million barrels per day (bpd) in May.

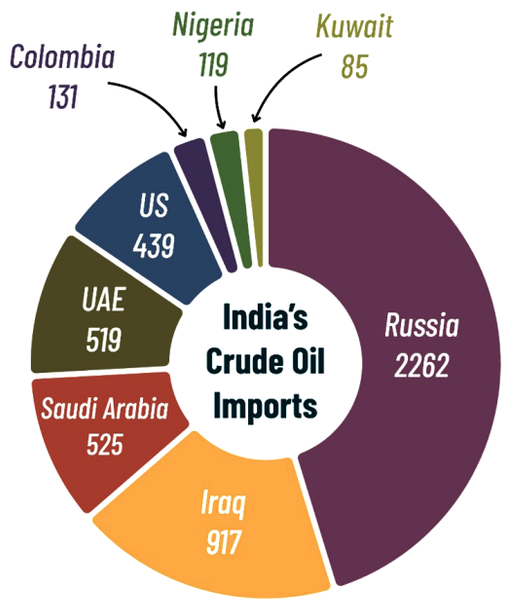
Imports from US also rose to 4,39,000 bpd in June, a big jump from 280,000 bpd purchased in the previous month.

Full-month projections for imports from Middle East stand at around 2 million bpd, lower than the previous month's buying, according to Kpler.

India, the world's third-largest oil-importing and consuming nation, bought from abroad around 5.1 million barrels of crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries. The conflict in Middle East has so far not impacted oil supplies.

The Strait of Hormuz, which lies between Iran to the north and Oman and UAE to the south, serves as the main route for oil exports from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and UAE.

Country-wise Breakdown of Import Volumes (in thousand barrels per day - kbpd)



Source: Global trade analytics firm Kpler

- As the conflict between Israel and Iran escalates, Tehran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and a major LNG export transit

As the military conflict between Israel and Iran escalates, Tehran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and a major LNG export transit.

In short, Indian refiners are watching the geopolitical landscape closely and are likely to adjust procurement strategies to prioritise energy security, supply stability, and commercial viability if risks in Middle East escalate. *—PTI*

Mkts to track global cues, oil prices amid Iran–Israel tension

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The Indian stock market is expected to track global cues this week, with a focus on escalating tensions between Israel and Iran and their impact on crude oil prices and global supply chains.

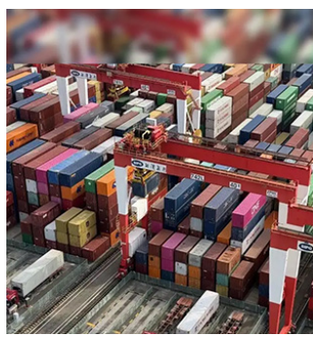
Analysts say investor sentiment will also be influenced by foreign portfolio investment trends, US economic data, and commentary from Federal Reserve officials.

Domestically, the progress of the monsoon, monthly expiry-related volatility, and India's PMI data will be key factors. Despite mid-week volatility, the market ended last week on a strong note. The Sensex surged 1,046 points to close at 82,408.17, while the Nifty climbed 319 points to settle at 25,112.40.

Experts expect market consolidation with bouts of volatility as geopolitical developments and economic indicators continue to guide direction. *—PTI*

Clashes likely to hit India–W Asia trade

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE



Experts warn that the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel is poised to have significant repercussions for India's trade relations with several West Asian countries, including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

The US recently targeted sites in Iran, adding to fears of a broader regional confrontation. "We are in for big trouble now because of this war," said Sharad Kumar Saraf, chairman of Technocraft Industries. He noted his company is currently holding back shipments to both nations.

The conflict is already impacting India's trade, with exports to Iran reaching USD 1.24 billion in FY2025, including key items like Basmati rice and tea. Imports from Iran totalled USD 441.8 million. With Israel, India's exports amounted to USD 2.1 billion and imports to USD 1.6

AIRTEL, RELIANCE LEAD

Mcap of six top-10 firms jumps ₹ 1.62L cr

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most-valued firms jumped Rs 1,62,288.06 crore last week, with Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainers, in-line with an optimistic trend in equities.

Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India and Infosys were the gainers, while TCS, LIC, Bajaj Finance, and Hindustan Unilever faced erosion from their market valuation last week.

The market valuation of Bharti Airtel surged Rs 54,055.96 crore to Rs 11,04,469.29 crore. Reliance Industries added Rs 50,070.14 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 19,82,033.60 crore. The valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 38,503.91 crore to Rs 15,07,281.79 crore while that of Infosys was up Rs 8,433.06 crore to Rs 6,73,751.09 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of ICICI Bank climbed Rs 8,012.13 crore to Rs 10,18,387.76 crore and that of State Bank of India gained Rs 3,212.86 crore to Rs 7,10,399.75 crore.

However, the valuation of Bajaj Finance fell Rs 17,876.42 crore to Rs 5,62,175.67 crore. The mcap of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) dropped Rs 4,613.06 crore to Rs 12,42,577.89 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever was down Rs 3,336.42 crore to Rs 5,41,557.29 crore. The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India dipped Rs 1,106.88 crore to Rs 5,92,272.78 crore.

In the ranking of the top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained the title of the most-valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Bajaj Finance, and Hindustan Unilever Ltd. *—PTI*

50% of India's power generation comes from non-fossil sources

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

India' non-fossil fuel-based capacity stands at 235.7 GW ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

As of June 2025, nearly half of India's total installed power generation capacity—476 GW—now comes from non-fossil fuel sources, according to official data. A government explainer on energy and the environment, released on Sunday, highlights a growing shift towards renewables, even as coal remains central to electricity generation.

Non-fossil fuel-based capacity stands at 235.7 GW, or 49 per cent of the total. This includes 226.9 GW from renewable sources and 8.8 GW from nuclear energy. Solar power leads the renewable sector with 110.9 GW, followed by 51.3 GW from wind. Additionally, 176.7 GW of renewable projects are under implementation, and another 72.06 GW are in the bidding phase.

Despite this progress, thermal power remains dominant, accounting for 240 GW or 50.52 per cent of total capacity. Coal alone contributes over 91 per cent of the thermal segment, underlining its continued importance in powering the country. *—PTI*

Easing content rules may hurt telecom

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Major dilutions to local content rules for the telecom sector under the Public Procurement Order could impact Indian firms by giving greater access to MNCs in government contracts without manufacturing in India, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) .

The GTRI in a note further said that the move will benefit major foreign MNCs active in the Indian telecom component industry.

On 3 June, the Department of Telecommunications initiated a public consultation to revise Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) (PPP-MII) Order for the telecom sector.

The consultation proposes a series of technical adjustments to the existing local content (LC) framework — changes that could have far-reaching consequences for the sector's future. *—ANI*

AGROCHEMICALS MARKET EYES $14.5B GROWTH BY 2028

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

India's agrochemicals industry remains resilient and is projected to grow to USD 14.5 billion by 2027-28, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9 per cent, despite global headwinds, according to a report by Rubix Data Sciences -- a leading provider of risk management and monitoring solutions.

According to the report, India's agrochemical industry is valued at USD 11.2 billion in 2024-25, having grown 8.7 per cent year-on-year despite a challenging global environment.

Exports saw a sharp 22 per cent decline in 2023-24, driven by global inventory destocking, aggressive price competition from China, and weak demand in major markets.

As global supply chains stabilise and agricultural activity rebounds, a moderate recovery is projected in 2024-25, supported by improved demand and cost-competitive manufacturing by Indian players.

One of the key trends highlighted in the report is the rapid growth of herbicide exports, which recorded a 20 per cent CAGR from 2019-20 to 2024-25. *—ANI*

'Housing sales to fall by 19% in top nine cities'

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Housing sales are estimated to fall 19 per cent in April–June across nine major cities to 94,864 units on lower launches and subdued demand, according to PropEquity.

Housing sales in Bengaluru are estimated to fall 6 per cent to 14,676 units from 15,582 units in the year-ago period. Sales of residential properties in Hyderabad are likely to fall 20 per cent to 11,815 units from 14,704 units.

Housing sales in Mumbai might fall 34 per cent to 8006 units from 12,114 units. Navi Mumbai is likely to witness 17 per cent decline in sales to 6,833 units from 8,224 units. Housing sales in Thane are expected to decline 34 per cent to 14,832 units. Pune is likely to witness a 27 per cent fall in sales to 17,196 units from 23,429 units. *—PTI*

Wine industry optimistic for FY26 after slowdown

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Sula Vineyards Ltd has expressed optimism for the Indian wine industry's recovery after a challenging 2024-25, marked by a slowdown in urban consumption and temporary market disruptions from elections. The company's annual report indicates a demand reset for wine, predominantly an urban drink, leading founder and CEO Rajeev Samant to project a more stable macro environment heading into FY26.

Despite these obstacles, Sula achieved a record revenue of Rs 619.4 crore in FY25, reinforcing its position as the leading wine brand in India. Samant noted signs of recovery, with domestic Own Brand sales, excluding Maharashtra and Karnataka, growing by 8 per cent year-on-year.

The burgeoning wine culture across India and increased consumer interest positions the sector for significant growth, with projections suggesting a 15 per cent CAGR from 2023 to 2028 *—ANI*

IMPACTING INDIAN WORKPLACE

Geopolitical tensions: 63% firms freeze hiring

MUMBAI, 22 JUNE

The report is based on an online survey among 2,006 employees from across sectors in the country during 12 May to 6 June ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Geopolitical tensions, including wars in the Middle East, have impacted the Indian workplace with 63 per cent of respondents confirming that their companies are either freezing hiring or downsizing teams, claims a report.

Over 63 per cent of respondents said their companies are either freezing hiring or downsizing teams with another 15 per cent noting a visible shift toward contract-based or freelance roles as the geopolitical tension escalates, the report by staffing solutions and HR services provider Genius Consultants has claimed.

The report is based on an online survey among 2,006 employees from across sectors in the country during 12 May to 6 June.

Further, the report revealed that 36 per cent of the employees interviewed stated that their salary growth, bonuses, or appraisals are affected in light of geopolitical instability.

Over 21 per cent said there is an increase in workload pressure and project timelines while 22 per cent reported that international business exposure or travel is disrupted, and 21 per cent stated that team morale and job confidence are taking a downturn, it added.

The report said that 30 per cent of employees admitted that they are extremely worried and are already witnessing early warning signs while 26 per cent described themselves as mildly concerned and closely monitoring the situation.

In such a scenario, the survey found that employees are taking action, with 55 per cent of respondents upskilling or enrolling in new certifications, and 31 per cent starting to explore new job opportunities or backup roles. *—PTI*

Renault, Skoda, VW struggle to boost sales in India

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

European automotive giants Renault, Volkswagen, and Skoda are facing significant challenges in the Indian market, with a decline in sales over the past three financial years, according to industry data from JATO Dynamics. Renault's sales plummeted to 37,900 units in 2024-2025, down from 45,439 units the previous year and 78,926 in 2022-2023. Skoda's sales showed a slight increase, reaching 44,866 units, but still down from 52,269 units in 2022-2023. Volkswagen also reported a decrease, with 42,230 units sold in 2024-25.JATO Dynamics India President Ravi G Bhatia attributed these struggles to a heavy focus on sedans, slow product refreshes, and a limited network in Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets. *—PTI*

CCL to bring two new mines into production this yr

RANCHI, 22 JUNE

Coal India arm Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) is planning to bring two new coal mines into production in the current financial year which would ramp up its capacity by 10–12 million tonnes per annum. The move assumes significance as the CCL aims to cross 110 million tonnes production in the current financial year and 150 million tonnes by 2030. "We have planned to open two new mines this year," CCL Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Nilendu Kumar Singh said on Sunday. The company plans to begin the production at Kotre Basantpur block (coking coal mine) with a peak rated capacity of 5 million tonnes by October. The Chandragupt open cast project will have a capacity of 15 million tonnes per annum. *—PTI*

Assam struggles to reach solar power output target

GUWAHATI, 22 JUNE

Assam, with an estimated rooftop solar (RTS) potential of 13,428 MW, currently generates only 60 MW, officials revealed. The state's new Integrated Clean Energy Policy aims to boost RTS capacity to 1,900 MW by 2030, up from the 300 MW target in its 2022 policy. Hirdesh Mishra, CEO of the Assam Climate Change Management Society, stressed the urgent need for clean energy in one of India's most climate-vulnerable states. Challenges include limited awareness, high upfront costs, and few skilled vendors. APDCL has installed 20,000 systems so far. Environmental experts highlight RTS as a land-neutral solution, especially vital in land-scarce Assam. Guwahati alone holds up to 984 MW potential. Strategic interventions could unlock massive job creation and energy independence*—PTI*

Raymond

Raymond to launch ₹14K cr housing projects in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Raymond Realty plans to unveil six residential projects in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) this fiscal, anticipating revenue of around Rs 14,000 crore amid strong market demand. In an interview, CEO Harmohan Sahni revealed the company will list on stock exchanges on 1 July following the demerger from Raymond Ltd, which will now concentrate solely on its engineering business. The demerger will enable Raymond Realty to grow independently as a pure-play real estate firm. With a significant presence established in Thane and Mumbai since its first project in 2019, the company boasts a gross development value of Rs 40,000 crore, with Rs 10,500 crore worth of projects already launched. The upcoming projects will feature housing units priced between Rs 2 crore and Rs 20 crore, focusing on quality and timely delivery. *—PTI*

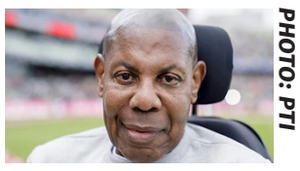


PHOTO: PTI

India and England players pay tribute to David 'Syd'

LONDON, 22 JUNE

India and England players wore black armbands to pay their respect to former fast bowler David Lawrence, who passed away on Sunday. He was 61. Lawrence, who was affectionately known as 'Syd', played five Tests (18 wickets) and a lone ODI (4 wickets) for England between 1988 and 1992. Lawrence, the first British-born Black cricketer to represent England, has been battling motor neurone disease (MND) since last year. Both teams are wearing black armbands to pay their respects to former England Cricketer, David 'Syd' Lawrence, who has sadly passed away. There was a moment's applause before the start of play on Day 3 —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Cauldron from Olympic Games returns to light

ROME, 22 JUNE

A year after it captivated crowds during the Paris Olympics, a centerpiece of the summer Games made a comeback Saturday to light up the French capital's skyline.The iconic helium-powered balloon that attracted myriads of tourists during the summer Games has shed its Olympic branding and is now just called the "Paris Cauldron." It rose again into the air later Saturday, lifting off over the Tuileries Garden just as the sun was about to set.Despite the suffocating hot weather in Paris, around 30,000 people were expected to attend the launch, which coincided with France's annual street music festival. the balloon will lift off into the sky each summer evening from June 21 to 14 Sept. for the next three years.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Kamal Chawla off to blazing start in Asian Snooker

COLOMBO, 22 JUNE

Kamal Chawla, the reigning IBSF World 6-Red snooker champion, was the most impressive of the three Indians in the fray, scoring a lopsided 4-1 win over Wai Ip Lam of Macao China on the opening day of the ACBS Asian 6-Red Snooker Championship here Sunday. After getting his eye in, the 45-year-old Chawla rifled in a brilliant 66 clearance in the second frame of the Group 'C' match. Chawla followed that up with a sizzling 67 clearance to take a vice-like grip over the proceedings.—*PTI*

Canada qualifies for men's T20 World Cup

ONTARIO, 22 JUNE

The Canadian men's cricket team has qualified for next year's ICC T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka after defeating the Bahamas by 7 wickets in the Americas Qualifiers here. Thanks to their fifth successive victory in as many games, Canada, who had also featured in last year's men's T20 World Cup in the Americas, have joined defending champions India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, SA, United States, West Indies, Ireland, New Zealand and Pakistan, in the 20-team event. "Seven more teams two from Europe Qualifier (to be played from 5-11 July, 2025), two from Africa Qualifier (to be played from 19 September to 4 October)—*PTI*

Inter ends Urawa's hopes with a win on 2 late goals

Borussia Dortmund beats Mamelodi Sundowns 4-3

Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez celebrates a win against Urawa Red Diamonds *PHOTO: X/@LAUTAROMARTINEZ*

CLUB WORLD CUP

SEATTLE, 22 JUNE

Valentin Carboni scored in stoppage time to give Inter Milan a 2-1 win over Urawa in the Club World Cup on Saturday, ending the Japanese club's chances of advancing past the group stage.

Inter Milan failed to score until the 78th minute, despite holding the vast majority of possession. Lautaro Martinez brilliantly bicycle kicked Nicolo Barella's corner ball into the net.

Carboni's game-winner, assisted by Francesco Esposito, came 14 minutes later. It was the culmination of multiple scoring threats by Inter, which had 21 more shot attempts than the Red Diamonds. Urawa opened the scoring in the 11th minute to the delight of their exuberant fans, who have shown up in droves for these Seattle cup matches. Ryoma Watanabe scored on an assist in transition by Takuro Kaneko, who found Watanabe all alone on the penalty spot with his cutback ball.

The fans in red filled the south end of Lumen Field and made up a large swath of the 25,090 attendees. Their coordinated chants and jeers didn't wane until after the final whistle. Urawa had a chance to equalize in the last minute of stoppage time, but goalkeeper Yann Sommer tipped the long-distance free kick over the crossbar.

Inter Milan takes over the top spot in Group E after following up their tournament-opening draw with a victory. The Italian club will play River Plate of Argentina on Wednesday. Urawa will be playing for pride against CF Monterrey on Wednesday.

Borussia Dortmund was gifted an easy goal at the beginning of the match and held off a late response from the Mamelodi Sundowns on a fiercely warm day to win 4-3 in the Club World Cup group stage on Saturday.

Both teams and the crowd of 14,006 at TQL Stadium sweated from high temperatures that forced a heat advisory and cooling breaks called at the referee's discretion. Temperatures approached 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius).

The Sundowns opened the scoring early on an impressive breakaway that Lucas Ribeiro Costa finished in the 11th minute. Dortmund evened the score in the 16th minute when Sundowns' goalie Ronwen Williams inadvertently passed to Dortmund's Felix Nmecha right in front of the net. Nmecha easily footed it in. Dortmund stole all momentum on the play and increased its lead to 3-1 at halftime. Serhou Guirassy scored in the 34th minute and Jobe Bellingham in the 45th.

Khuliso Mudau's own goal on an attempt to deflect Daniel Svensson's cross in front of the net made it 4-1 in the 59th before Mamelodi centered itself and began putting pressure on the German club.—*PTI*

TENDULKAR ANDERSON TROPHY

Jasprit Bumrah is the world's best: Ben Duckett

LEEDS, 22 JUNE

Jasprit Bumrah is undoubtedly the world's best bowler and extremely hard to face when he "comes in down the hill with lights on and swinging both ways", feels England opener Ben Duckett after the India pace spearhead tormented the host batters in the opening Test here.

Bumrah (3/48) was exceptional, grabbing all the England wickets that fell on Day 2, including that of the dangerous Joe Root. England, though, recovered from the early loss of opener Zak Crawley (4) to end the day on 209 for 3 in reply to India's first innings total of 471.

One-down Ollie Pope was holding fort on an unbeaten 100 with England still trailing by 262 runs.

"He (Bumrah) is the best bowler in the world.

Bumrah picks up a fifer, but England draw parity with India by making 465 all out

Harry Brook ran out of luck on 99 before Jasprit Bumrah completed a well-deserved five-wicket haul to ensure a slender six-run first innings lead for India, who bowled out England for 465 in an extended afternoon session on day three of the first Test here on Sunday.Before Bumrah castled Josh Tongue to end England innings, Chris Woakes (38 off 55) punished a predictable Indian pace attack to take his team close to India's 471. England's tail virtually cancelled out the Indian first innings with the match now hinged on third and fourth innings respectively.Hosts continued to find the boundaries at will as they collected 138 runs in 23.4 overs in the afternoon session with the loss of five wickets. Prasidh Krishna removed Jamie Smith (40 off 52) and Brook (99 off 112) with the short ball, but leaked too many runs at the same time with his one-dimensional tactic. —*PTI*

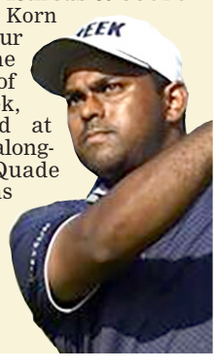
Rayhan Thomas drops to 40th on Korn Ferry

WICHITA, 22 JUNE

Dubai-based Rayhan Thomas had a roller coaster of a round with five birdies and two double bogeys besides three other bogeys for a card of 2-over 72 that pushed him down to tied 40th in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Wichita Open here.

He was earlier placed tied 17th at the end of 36 holes.

Thomas was 2-under through, but a bogey and a double bogey on the eighth and the ninth saw him turn in one-over. On the back nine, he birdied the 11th, but dropped a double on the 12th and had a bogey on the 13th. Then followed birdies on the 14th and the 16th, but he closed with a bogey for a 72. Myles Creighton, who shot a 59 for the 15th sub-60 score on the Korn Ferry Tour and the second of the week, was tied at the top alongside Quade Cummins heading into the final round. —*PTI*



MARQUEZ WINS ITALIAN GRAND PRIX

ROME, 22 JUNE

Ducati's Marc Marquez won the Italian Grand Prix after a dogfight for podium places at the Mugello Circuit on Sunday, taking the chequered flag ahead of his brother Alex to maintain his iron grip on the riders' championship.

Gresini Racing's Alex briefly led the race early on before Marc took control. At the same time, Fabio Di Giannantonio of VR46 Racing claimed third place after snatching the final podium spot from his Italian compatriot Francesco Bagnaia. Home favourite Bagnaia also led the race in the initial stages, but the Italian, who had won the last three races at Mugello, was overshadowed by the Marquez brothers and could only finish fourth in front of his home fans.

Marc's victory was also the 93rd win of his career across all classes. —*PTI*

Carlos Alcaraz wins 2025 HSBC Championships title

PARIS, 22 JUNE

Carlos Alcaraz has warmed up for his Wimbledon title defense by capturing the HSBC Championships on Sunday.

Carlos Alcaraz claimed his second Queen's title and

TENNIS

installed himself as the firm favourite for a Wimbledon three-peat as he defeated Jiri Lehecka in three sets: 7-5, 6-7, 6-2.Alcaraz never faced a break point in a display that crowned an excellent week in west London.

He has so many options that he didn't need to use his famous drop shots to any great extent, preferring to lean on a serve that has dominated every opponent in this tournament.In five victories at Queen's Club, Alcaraz lost two sets, but both of these involved tie-breaks.

McCartney Kessler wins Nottingham Open for first grass title

American McCartney Kessler secured her third career title Sunday, defeating Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska 6-4, 7-5 in a rain-interrupted Nottingham Open final. Kessler, who recorded her first main-draw tour-level win on grass earlier this month at Queen's, dominated the match from the outset and sealed victory in 1 hour, 34 minutes. —*PTI*

Alcaraz lifts the Queen's Club trophy *PHOTO: X/@CARLITOSAL-*

ALEXANDER BUBLIK DOWNS MEDVEDEV

LONDON, 22 JUNE

Alexander Bublik crowned his red-hot run of form with a title on Sunday, when the Kazakhstani overcame Daniil Medvedev to triumph at the Terra Wortmann Open.

The free-hitting Bublik delivered a typically showstopping display of shotmaking to prevail 6-3, 7-6(4) against Medvedev and recapture the Halle grass-court trophy that he previously lifted in 2023. Bublik, who reached his first Grand Slam quarter-final at Roland Garros earlier this month, combined huge serving, powerful groundstrokes, and crafty drop shots to great effect before sealing his first win in seven Lexus ATP Head2Head meetings with Medvedev. —*PTI*

India women lose 0-2

Women's hockey team went down 0-2 to Belgium *PHOTO: PTI*

ANTWERP, 22 JUNE

The Indian women's hockey team went down 0-2 to Belgium to suffer its sixth successive defeat in the European leg of the FIH Pro League and inch closer to relegation here on Sunday.

After two goalless quarters, Belgium scored twice in quick succession in the third quarter to win the reverse fixture a day after a 5-1 mauling of the beleaguered Indian side.

Ambre Ballenghie broke the deadlock in the 40th minute of the game, and Lien Hillewaert scored the team's second goal in the 43rd minute. The result has seen India drop to the ninth and last spot on the table with 10 points from their 14 matches. On the other hand, this win ensured Belgium remained in the third place behind Netherlands and Argentina who are in the first and second position respectively. —*PTI*

VONDROUSOVA WINS BERLIN FOR THIRD CAREER TITLE

DUBAI, 22 JUNE

Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova needed three sets to subdue Chinese qualifier Wang Xinyu 7-6(12-10), 4-6, 6-2 on Sunday and win the Berlin Open title, completing an improbable run to her first trophy since her London triumph two years ago.

The 2023 Wimbledon champion, who missed the second half of last year due to injury, picked up her third career title, which will propel her back inside the world's top 100 at around the No. 73 mark.

The 25-year-old Czech, ranked 164th in the world after an injury-plagued 12 months and featuring in her first final since winning Wimbledon two years ago, saved six setpoints in a tight first-set tiebreak.

The 23-year-old Wang showed few nerves on her maiden singles tour final and levelled after breaking her opponent once in the second set. raced back with two breaks of her own to go 4-1 up in the decider. —*PTI*

Marketa Vondrousova on Sunday won the Berlin Open title *PHOTO: X/@MARKETAVONDROUSOVA*

AFTER 2022 HEARTBREAK

Indian women eye a fresh start in AC Qualifiers

CHIANG MAI, 22 JUNE

More than three years after a COVID outbreak in the team derailed their campaign in the last AFC Women's Asian Cup, India will make a fresh bid for a place in the continental showpiece, with Mongolia being their first test in the Qualifiers here on Monday.

The upcoming edition of the premier tournament will be held in Australia next year.

"I tried different variations in our friendlies (against Uzbekistan). I tested many combinations in midfield, involving Sangita (Basfore), Karthika (Angamuthu), Ratanbala (Nongmaithem), Grace (Dangmei), and Anju (Tamang)."

Anju Tamang and Team India are aiming to put the disappointments of the AFC Women's Asian Cup heartbreak behind *PHOTO: AIFF MEDIA*

The continent's top competition has been somewhat ill-fated for the Blue Tigresses in the last few decades.

India last made it to the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2003. And when they hosted the tournament in 2022, a COVID outbreak in the side meant that India had to withdraw after only the first game and the results were declared void.

While India do have three podium finishes in the erstwhile Asian Women's Championship (runners-up in 1980 and 1983, and third place in 1981), they have not achieved anything for more than 40 years.

Besides the opener against Mongolia, India (ranked 70th) will face Timor Leste (ranked 158th) on 29 June, Iraq (ranked 173rd) on 2 July and hosts Thailand (ranked 46th) on 5 July, at the Chiang Mai Stadium. —*PTI*

Six Indian boxers in finals of Seychelles Boxing

MAHE, 22 JUNE

India is assured of several top-podium finishes with six of its pugilists entering the finals of the Seychelles National Day Boxing Tournament here.

Aditya Pratap (65kg) of Uttar Pradesh, who has represented the country in the Elorda Cup in Kazakhstan and had bagged a silver in the National Combined Finals, impressed with an RSC win in the third round over home favourite Jovanie Bouzin.

Neeraj (75kg), another silver medallist at the National Combined, too, came up with a referee stops contest (RSC) verdict against his opponent in the second round.

Himanshu Sharma (50kg) of Haryana, a former Belgrade Boxing champion and bronze medallist at the 6th Elite Nationals, secured a confident 4-1 win against Mathieu Souprayen of Mauritius.

In the 55kg bout, Ashish Mudshaniya of Uttar Pradesh, the reigning National Combined champion, continued his fine form with an easy 4-1 victory over Guillaume Francis, also from Mauritius. —*PTI*